

Several TRACTS

Formerly Published *10/7c*

Now Collected into ONE VOLUME.

V I Z.

- I. *A Letter to the Reverend Mr. Fleetwood, concerning Miracles. Written, A. D. 1702.*
- II. *A Letter about the Bishop's Votes upon the Occasional Bill. 1703.*
- III. *A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Francis Atterbury, concerning Virtue, and Vice. 1706.*
- IV. *A Second Letter, in Answer to his Large Vindication. 1708.*
- V. *A Vindication of the Antient Prophets, in Answer to Sir R. B. 1709.*
- VI. *Some Considerations offered to the Lord Bishop of Exeter. 1709.*
- VII. *An Humble Reply to the Lord Bishop of Exeter. 1709.*
- VIII. *Queries to the Authors of the late Discourse of Free-Thinking. 1713.*

To which are added,

SIX SERMONS, never before Publish'd: viz.

Two Sermons concerning the Evils, of which Christianity hath been made the Occasion.

Four Sermons concerning the Extremes of Implicit Subjection, and Infidelity.

By BENJAMIN HOADLY, M. A. Rector
of St. Peter's Poor.

L O N D O N,

Printed for J. KNAPTON, at the Crown; and T. CHILDE,
at the White Hart; in St. Paul's Church-Yard. MDCCXV.



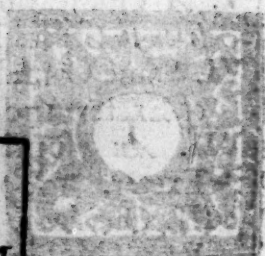
THE

PREFACE

The following Piece
having been reported as
being a Person;
it is to be

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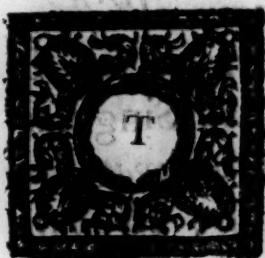
MUSEUM
BRITANNICUM



The First contains some Points re-
lating to the Subject of Muscles, in
which I differed, long ago, from an
Excellent Person; now deceased, by
his Merit, to one of the highest Sta-
tions in the Church. When first
appeared in the World, He had too
great a Soul, to make the common Re-
mark



THE PREFACE.



THE following Pieces,
having been enquired af-
ter by several Persons;
it was thought fit to re-
print them.

The First contains some Points, re-
lating to the Subject of Miracles, in
which I differed, long ago, from an
Excellent Person; now advanced, by
his Merits, to one of the Highest Sta-
tions in the Church. When it first
appeared in the World, He had too
great a Soul, to make the common Re-

The Preface.

turn of Resentment, or Contempt; or, to esteem a Difference of Opinion, express'd with Civility, to be an Unpardonable Affront. So far from it, that He not only was pleas'd to express some good liking of the Manner of it; but laid hold on an Opportunity, which then immediately offer'd it self, of doing the Writer a very Considerable piece of Service. I think my self oblig'd, upon this Occasion, to acknowledge this, in a public manner: Wishing that such a procedure may, at length, cease to be uncommon, and Singular. I shall only add that, as this was His Reception of it, at first; so, He hath now given me leave to say that this Second Publication of it is neither unknown, nor disagreeable, to Him.

The Second was written at a Time, when the Name of the Church was made use of, as I thought, to the great disadvantage of the Church it self; as well as, of the most valuable, and important
Parts

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Parts of all Religion. The particular Occasion of it was the Unchristian Treatment of many Excellent Persons amongst the Bishops, merely because They could not think, as others of their Brethren thought.

The Argument handled in it, had one Advantage at that time, that the Church was not then supposed to be in any danger: But the contrary granted by All those who differed most from their Lordships. How it came afterwards to be in that imminent danger, in which so many represented it; every one knows, as well as I.

What I proposed at first, by publishing it, was not to give the World the Reasons, their Lordships acted upon; which would have been great Presumption in a Person, at that time, hardly known to one of them: But the Reasons, why I could not join in the popular Clamour against Them: which, being not mix'd

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with the least Unhandsome Reflexion upon Others, I hoped, might influence some to a more decent, and Christian Behaviour. I now reprint it, not only because several have enquired after it: but because, being written at the time when I was engaged in removing the Chief Objections of our Dissenting Brethren against Conformity, I am willing, it should stand as an open proof that what I was then doing, proceeded from a desire of Union, upon no other, but the Christian Principle of Peace and Love; and that even my Youngest Thoughts upon these Subjects could not enter into the Contrary Method of applying Civil Encouragements, or Discouragements, in Religious Matters, to the Consciences of Men.

The Two Sermons, which here follow this Piece, were first Preached about the same Time; and with the same sort of view: to dissuade all Christians from mixing Religion into their Worldly Designs;

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signs; and also, to remove the worst of Scandals from Christianity it self, which must otherwise suffer under the reproach of those Evils, of which, against it's own Design and Tendency, it hath been forced to be the Occasion.

The Two Letters, which follow next, were designed to vindicate, and establish, the happy Tendency, of Virtue, and Morality, to the present Happiness of such a Creature, as Man is: which I ever esteem'd, and do still esteem, a point of the utmost Importance to the Gospel it self. It is with the same View, that they are now reprinted.

The next Piece is a Vindication of the Antient Prophets, &c. written indeed, at a Time, when I was engaged in Thoughts of another nature. But this was not then judg'd to be a sufficient Excuse for the not doing it, by Those, who press'd it upon me,

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as a thing which that particular Season required. The Gentleman, who gave occasion to it, had a Reputation for Learning; and especially for Scripture-Learning: all which He had employ'd, to force the whole of God's proceedings throughout the Bible, into the Service of his New Cause; throwing plenty of Contempt, and Censure, upon all who came in his way. I did, therefore, upon the request of Others, consider, in the Order of that Author himself, every particular alleged by Him: And then, I resign'd up what I had written, to the disposal of Those, who thought the Publication of it might be of use to many, at that Juncture.

The next Two Pieces, inscrib'd to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Exeter, relate to a Subject, in which the Consciences, and Conduct, of the whole Nation, appear'd to me, to be exceedingly concern'd. If what
I have

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I have said, at the End of the Second of Them, by way of Apology for my self, be not sufficient to justify me, as an Englishman, a Christian, and a Divine, in what I have done upon this Subject; nothing that I can add, will do it: and I must be content still to suffer, under a Character which I have little deserved, for my long-continued Endeavours to defend those Principles, to which both the Right, and Possession, of that Illustrious Family, in which the Nation is now happy, are entirely owing.

The Queries to the Authors of the Discourse of Free-Thinking, follow next: which, I hope, are sufficiently justifiable by the Occasion, then given for them; and may be always of use, to all Impartial Enquirers into Religion.

To these I have now added Four Sermons, Preached at the same Time: in which I have, more at length, handled

The Preface.

led the same Subjects; and added what is of great Importance, to take Mens Minds off from all pretenses to that Incontestable Authority, and Implicit Subjection, which are the strongest of all Bars against Inward, and True, Religion. I should be sorry to find that, amongst Protestants, it should stand in need of any Apology, to referr Men to Christ himself, for the Fundamentals of Christ's Religion; and not to any Humane Constitution whatsoever. If any Persons dislike this Method; let them try how well they can combat Infidelity, upon any other Bottom. For my own part; I confess, I know not how to do it.

This is all the Account, I have to give, of the following Pieces. I wish, it had been in my power, to be more Usefull to the Public, than I have been. But I have, at least, the Reward of this Satisfaction, upon the Review, that I have omitted
no

The Preface.

no fair Opportunity of doing the utmost I could, towards the establishing, in the Minds of Men, the justest Notions of Many Points, in which the Present, and Eternal, Happiness of Mankind are very much concerned.



THE

The Preface.

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blishing, in the Minds of Men, the
justest Notions of many Points, in
which the Present, and Eternal,
Happiness of Mankind are very much
concerned.

As I have been so long, in the
Study of the Holy Scriptures, on this
Subject, I have been able to collect
many Things, which I have here
presented.

It is my Desire, that this
Tract may be of some Use, to
the Readers, and may be
of some Occasion, to the
Reformation of Manners.

I have here presented
the most important
Points, which I have
been able to collect, in
this Subject, in the Year
1703.

It is my Desire, that this
Tract may be of some Use, to
the Readers, and may be
of some Occasion, to the
Reformation of Manners.

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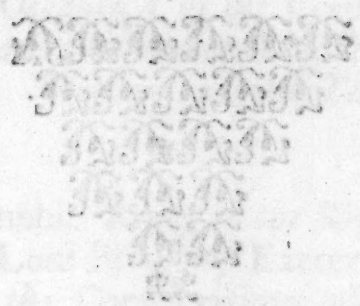
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A

I.
A LETTER
To the Reverend
Mr. *FLEETWOOD.*

Occasion'd by his
ESSAY
ON
MIRACLES.



Written in the Year, 1702.

I.

A LETTER

To the Reverend

Mr. FLEETWOOD.

Occasion'd by his

ESSAY

ON

MIRACLES.



Written in the Year, 1702.

A

LETTER

To the Reverend

Mr. *FLEETWOOD*,

Concerning

MIRACLES.

S I R,

THE Importance of this Subject (as it nearly relates to Religion, the great Business of our Lives) makes me wish that all serious Persons could agree in their Thoughts and Notions about it : Or, if this is not to be hop'd for, at least that they would be careful, while they establish their own Scheme, not to condemn all others who differ from them, as advancing Schemes *utterly inconsistent with the maintenance of Christianity*. This is not of the best consequence, when the Case is not very *apparent* : and we should rather be willing to shew, that the same Satisfaction may possibly be obtain'd in a Method different from our own, tho' we do not our selves follow it. The Proofs you have for these many Years given the World of a sound Judgment, and a hearty Design of promoting true and serious Religion, forbid me to think you would have done

this, if the Matter had not seem'd *evident* beyond contradiction to you. And that Sweetness of Temper, and sincere Love of Truth, that are remarkable in your last performance, leave me no room to doubt but that you will, with all the readiness in the World, pardon me, if I interrupt you a little; and endeavour, in the best way I can, to represent the Matter so to you, as to oblige you to return to your Enquiries into this Subject, and examine once more, whether you ought to reject all Schemes contrary to your own, as you do. This I should be induc'd to do for my own private Satisfaction: But the reason why I do it in this manner is, because very many, I believe, have been, and are daily, taught to embrace the Notions you condemn; and, you know, it is fit, if they can be defended, something should be said for the Satisfaction of such Persons; or, if they cannot, it should be demonstrated with so great Evidence before their Eyes, that their Judgments may not be left in suspense, or undetermin'd in so concerning a Matter: which I do not think, it is yet.

The two principal Things in which I find myself obliged to differ from you; and which are the Foundation of all our other Differences, are these,

I. That none but God can work a *True Miracle*.

II. That it cannot be suppos'd that a *True Miracle*, or a Work which we cannot distinguish from a *True Miracle*, has been, or may be, ever wrought in opposition to any Doctrine, or Pretense, establish'd, or to be establish'd, upon *True Miracles*. And you often declare, and insinuate, that the Argument for Religion taken from *Miracles* can be defended on no other Foundation. I shall beg leave therefore,

I. To

I. To represent a *Scheme* to you contrary to your own: not according to my own Sentiments only; but, as I have Reason to think, according to those of several learned and judicious Persons: And,

II. To shew that this *Scheme* may be maintain'd without the least prejudice to *Truth* or *Religion*. After which, I hope you will pardon me, if I endeavour to make it appear,

III. That the Reasons you have already given for rejecting all other *Schemes*, and advancing your own, are not sufficient.

But, before I begin, it is necessary for me to premise, that I mean by *Miracles*, the *same* Works, or Works of the *same* Nature, with those done by *Moses* and *Christ*, which the *Scripture* and we call *Miracles*. This is no false Step in the Dispute between us, because we both acknowledge *these* to be the Standard of *true Miracles*: And this is better, in the *present Case*, than to lay down any other *definition*, which we are never likely to agree in. Having said thus much, I proceed to what I propos'd.

And here, I believe, I need not observe, that God, the Fountain of all Being, can Communicate *Power* and *Knowledge* in what degrees He pleases, at the same time that He communicates *Being*; that He has done this, in several and different degrees, to those innumerable *Orders* of *created Beings*, that gradually descend from *Perfection* to the last degree of *Imperfection*; that, as we have infinite *Orders* of *Creatures* below us in *Power*, so we have numberless *Orders* of more *powerful* and *knowing* *Creatures* above us. Now, as *Reason* teaches us this, so *Revelation* assures us, that one *Order* of these *Creatures* above us, I mean the *Angels*, excel in *Strength*, or *Power*, and

6 *A LETTER to Mr. Fleetwood*

Knowledge, i. e. that they are wonderfully *Powerful* above us, who are made lower than the *Angels*. That these *Spirits* were endow'd with this *Power* (so much above ours) at their *Creation*, we have no reason to doubt; and we are taught that they were made thus, in order to be the *Ministers* of God's Will; to be his *Messengers*, and to perform his Commands, in and about this Earth which we inhabit; which supposes a *Knowledge* in them of the *Nature* of *Man*, and that part of the *Creation* especially which *Man* is confin'd to. We are assur'd, that part of these *Glorious Creatures* had such an *Opinion* of their own *Power* and *Knowledge*, that they exalted themselves against *God*; or behaved themselves so, in some instance or other, as that they were cast down from their *Glorious Habitation*, to dwell nearer *Mankind*. And since that, they are the *Powers* of the *Air*, or of *Darkness*: and One of them seems peculiarly to be call'd the *Prince of the Power of the Air*, *Eph. 2. 2.* That these *Spirits* had an *inherent Power*, before their Fall, of doing some *Works*, which you your self acknowledge to be truly *Miracles*, to me is past doubt: And I'm sure I may say, no one can prove that their *inherent Power*, or *Knowledge*, is diminish'd since their Fall. [Why I think the *Reasons* that incline you to think otherwise insufficient, you will see by and by: At present I am only to represent this *Scheme* to you, and to shew there is nothing in it to the *prejudice* of *Religion*.] And for ought I see, you your self cannot help sometimes agreeing with me in this. You acknowledge a *Man's* walking upon the *Water* to be truly a *Miracle*, and a considerable one, more than once. This must be done, or, at least, it may be done, by means of some *Powerful Being*, supporting his *Body* so that it shall not sink. I say, a less *Power* than perfect *Power* can do this, and you your self more than grant me the *Point*; for you grant an *Angel* or *Spirit*

it can do what, it is evident, requires a greater Power than this. For p. 190. of your *Essay*, you, in effect, acknowledge the *natural Powers of Angels* such as suffice to bear up a *Body*, and carry it through the *Air*: which (if we speak nicely) requires greater Power than to support a *Body* from sinking into the *Water*; because *Water* resists more than *Air*. Nay, p. 188. you acknowledge that you know not but that *Spirits* may have Force and Power enough to bear up a huge *Mountain* (much heavier than the *Body* of a *Man*) in the *Air*. And, I say, if you acknowledge they can do these, you must grant they can support a *Humane Body*, so as that it shall not sink into the *Water*; and consequently can work a *Miracle*: except you are resolv'd to maintain, that the same *Work*, perform'd by the assistance of an *Angel* or *Spirit*, is not a *Miracle*, which, perform'd immediately by *God*, is: which I cannot think you mean. If you do, you are obliged to prove, that there is a manifest difference (with respect to the Spectators) between this *Work*, when done by the assistance of a *Spirit*, and the same *Work*, when done by the assistance of *God*. But, to return, what I would have granted is, that a *Spirit* may have an *inherent, natural Power* of doing Works of the same nature with those, your self, as well as I, account *Miraculous*; the same Works, you acknowledge *Miracles*, when done by *God* himself; and I think you are of my side in this.

To proceed therefore, If these *Spirits* have this *inherent Power*, we may easily know to what purposes that part of them that have rebelled against *God*, and have their Habitation in these lower Regions, will make use of it. They are full of *Rage* and *Malice* against the *Souls of Men*: and they and their *Prince* are combined in a design directly opposite to the design of *Almighty God*. This they are constantly carrying on, labouring to distract *Mankind* in the

great Concern of *Religion*, to draw them from the Worship and Service, of the one Supreme God; and to this end, we may be sure, they will employ all their *Power*, as well as all their *Cunning* and *Knowledge*. That *Almighty God* has taken away their *Power* since they were engag'd in this wicked design, no one can prove. Now my Opinion is, that He may permit them, by the instigation of their own Malice, to make use of this *Power* in opposition to *Himself*, and to *True Religion*, by shewing forth some of those *Works* which we acknowledge to be *Miracles*, or doing some things which, with all examination, the World cannot distinguish from *Miracles*; which I acknowledge, with you, to be all one, with respect to the Spectators, or those who are to be the Judges of 'em. This is what I maintain: which I would not do, but that I am fully persuaded that, in case of Opposition or Contest between two Persons, (which is the only case we are concern'd about now,) there may be so plain and evident a *distinction* made, that it shall not be a difficult matter for the World to judge, who acts by the Superior Power, or on which side the advantage lies. It is my Opinion, that this is effectually done, if there be *greater*, and *more*, *Miracles* on one side than the other. But you absolutely deny all *difference* in *Miracles*: and often declare that the Topic of *greater* and *more* *Miracles*, is not to be insisted on.

Here therefore, I must beg leave, in pursuance of my design, to shew these two things. 1st. That some *Miracles* are *greater* than others. And 2^{dly}, That *many* *Miracles* give an advantage to the Person who is the Instrument of performing them, above him who works *not so many*. After which, I may safely conclude, that there can be no danger to *Religion* from God's permitting a wicked *Spirit* to work *Miracles*: because then I shall have shewn that
such

such a *distinction* may be made, that the World shall not be left in suspense, on which side to judge. And,

First, That there is a *distinction* between Miracles, as to their *Greatness*. Here give me leave to observe, that when you speak of the *Equality* of *Miracles*, you instance in *Creation*: which I cannot apprehend to be any thing to the purpose. For what if it be as *easie* to make an *Elephant* as a *Fly*? (as you instance p. 31. I think it easier, if we speak with respect to any but perfect Power, and perfect Wisdom.) But, I say, what if it be as *easie*? And what if it requires no less Power to make a *Butter-fly* than an *Army* of *Eagles*? (as you say p. 212. or, an *Eel* than a *Dragon*, as p. 33. which I suppose true without Examination;) how does it follow from thence, that it is as difficult to support a *Body* from sinking into the *Water*, as to make a *Fly*, or an *Eagle*? Which you name for *Miracles*. Or, how does it follow, that a *Power* that can change the *Figure* and *Motion* of inanimate Particles of *Water*, so as that it shall become *Wine*, or *Blood*, is also able to cure all *Diseases* in a moment, or to raise a dead *Body* to *Life* again? I do not see how, I confess. I observe farther, that you naturally fall into this distinction of *greater* and *less* your self, p. 187. where you assure us, *You account the turning Water into Wine, &c. a greater Miracle, than a Mountain's being supported in the Air, and carried two Miles; which I must think a Miracle, (as I observ'd before) whether done by a Spirit, or by Almighty God: because here is the supporting a weighty Body in the Air, which, without the Interposition of some powerful Being, could not be supported in that yielding Body; and because our Lord instances himself in the removing of a Mountain, as a Miracle to be perform'd by his Disciples, if they had Faith. Matth. 17. 20, 21, 22.* But, to return to what I propos'd,

First,

First, You cannot but acknowledge those *Miracles* are *greater* than others, that require, or are a Sign of, a *greater degree of Power* than others. I instance in the supporting a huge Mountain in the *Air*, as a thing that requires *greater Power* than the supporting an humane Body from sinking into the *Water*: because *Air* yields to an heavy Body more than *Water*; and because *that* Body is heavier than the Body of a Man. There may be therefore, a *Power* able to do the one, which yet may not be able to perform the other. Thus, it is certainly a thing that requires *more Power* to put the *Air*, 2000 Miles round, into a violent motion, than the *Air* 200 Miles round: and therefore, those Beings which may have Force enough to effect the *one*, yet may not, to effect the *other*. The Case is not very different, if we put *Water* instead of *Air*, the dissimilitude between 'em being not very great: and therefore I must think, that the turning a *vast* River, and *all* the *Waters* of *Egypt* into *Blood* in a moment, requires *more Power*, than the turning a little *Water*; and that therefore, those Beings, which may have Power enough to effect this alteration of the Figure and Motion of the Particles of *Water* in a *lesser Quantity*, may not have Power enough to effect it in a Quantity vastly *greater*. Thus again, those Beings which may have Power to bring up Ten thousand Frogs, may not have Power enough to bring up Ten millions (supposing so many in the Creation:) and therefore, the doing this is evidently a Sign of *more Force and Power*, than the doing the other. Once more, I cannot but think that, in a Contest, it is a sign of *greater Power* to produce a Serpent that has *more force and strength*, than one that has *less*; and that the Production (by which I do not here mean the Creation) of a Serpent that has Power and Strength enough to overcome another is a sign of *greater Power*, than the production of one that has
not

not Strength to resist it: This being a demonstration that there is a *Power* on one side, which the *Power* on the other side cannot resist. And I wonder to see you deny these things, p. 32.

Secondly, Those *Works* I cannot but account greater than others, which require, and are a sign of, more *Knowledge* (which is a *Power*) as well as *Power*, properly so call'd. To put an Instrument in order that is compos'd of a great number of Wheels and Springs, requires more *Skill*, and *Knowledge*, and *Contrivance*, than to put one in order that is of a more simple, and uncompounded Make: and to put this *Machine perfectly* in order, when it is *all disorder'd*, is a Work of greater *Skill*, than to rectifie the disorder of one particular *Wheel* or *Spring* in it. Thus, to put the *Eye perfectly* in order, is more difficult than to put any other part that is not of so nice a disposition, and does not consist of so great a number of Organs; because it requires a more *extensive Knowledge*: and to put this *perfectly* in order when *ev'ry* little part of it is disorder'd, more difficult, upon the same account, than to rectifie the disorder of any *one Fibre*, or *Membrane*, that composes it: And a *Being* that may be able to do the one, may *not* be able to do the other. So, To put the *whole Body* in perfect order, when it is *all disorder'd*, is still more *difficult* than to rectifie the disorders of any *one Member* of it: And to put it all into such order again, after the Soul has left it, (as an Habitation wholly unfit for it to act in) that *ev'ry* the least Particle of it shall be in exact order and disposition, fit for all the Operations of *Life*, *Sense*, and *Motion*, is yet more *difficult*; because it requires a yet greater degree of Sagacity and Knowledge. For, tho' all these are to be done *miraculously*, in the Case we are speaking of: yet they are to be done by a *Knowledge* that comprehends clearly the nature, disposition, and composition, of *one Member*, or of the *whole*

whole Body ; the infinite number of Parts that make it up ; what Avenues and Passages are to be open'd ; what Nerves to be strengthen'd ; what degree, and what determination, of Motion is to be given to the Blood and Animal Spirits ; and more things, necessary to such Operations, than we know, or can think of. I might give other Instances : but these are sufficient to shew what I mean.

Thirdly, Give me leave to reckon those *Miracles* amongst the *Miracles* that are *greater* than others, which seem more plainly to shew the Lord and Governor of Mankind *himself* present with a Person, than others do. Thus, in case of a contest, or opposition, I could not but think the *raising* the *Dead* to Life again, a *greater* Miracle than the being supported so as not to sink into the Water ; or the alteration of the Motion and Figure of the Particles of Water, so as to make it Wine : not only, because it requires *more Knowledge and Power* than the others ; but because the *Life* of a Man, and his continuance in this World, seems so much the peculiar Concern of the *Providence* and *Appointment* of God, *with whom are the Issues of Life and Death*, that I cannot think any Being else to have any thing to do with it. There is a great difference between altering the Particles of an inanimate Body ; and having Power of the *Life* and *Death* of reasonable Creatures. And therefore, tho' I see no absurdity in holding that *Spirits* may do that ; or may have power to support a Body from sinking ; or the like : yet, I think it unreasonable to suppose that, when God has taken Men out of this World, any of *them* should have power enough to determine and bring it about, that they should have another abode, and time of continuance, in it. I hope what I have said is sufficient to shew that one *Miracle* may properly be said to be *greater* than another.

2. The other thing I was to speak of, is this, that *many* Miracles give the Person who works 'em a great advantage : which you absolutely deny. And yet you your self acknowledge, p. 34. that the *working many Miracles will naturally gain a greater Authority*. [Thus we may guess it was amongst the Jews from their Question, *Job. 7. 31. When Christ shall come, will He do more Miracles than this Man?*] Nay, You give very good Reasons why it is so, *because more People are concern'd, and come to the knowledge of 'em; more have the privilege of being Eye-witnesses to 'em; and because they who have seen more, are better assur'd that their Senses were not impos'd upon, than if they had seen but one.* And after you have said but thus much, I wonder you can say that this Topic will hardly bear insisting upon; nay, that it adds no advantage to a Person. For by this You give me leave, your self, to say,

First, That supposing the *many* wonderful Works this Person performs, to be of the *same* kind : yet the number of 'em does encrease my Satisfaction, and serve to assure me, that He does not impose upon the World ; or take advantage of a lucky Event, or happy Opportunity ; but really does the Works that He pretends to do. Therefore I must give this Person the *advantage* over *one*, who does not give the World so much assurance of that. And since I cannot have so much satisfaction in this Point from *one*, as from *more* Miracles ; I cannot but think *many Miracles*, and especially, an uninterrupted *Series of Miracles*, a reasonable addition to the Authority of any Person : and therefore worth insisting on. And if these *many* Miracles, tho' of the *same* kind, differ in any considerable Circumstance, they will be of greater weight with me, and give me greater assurance of what I desire to be certain of. For, *suppose You or I (as You go on, p. 35.) should have seen our Child rais'd from the Dead ;*
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if this was presently after we suppos'd the Breath to be gone out of his Body, I hardly think we should have had as great assurance that the Person who did this, had a *power* of raising the Dead, as if we should see him afterwards restore Life to one now just carried out to Burial ; or to one after He had lain Three days in his Grave.

But to this I must add, that *many* Miracles, when they are not of the *same* sort, are still a greater *advantage* to the Person who performs them : as they give the World a yet greater assurance that He has a power of working *True Miracles*. If a Person should pretend He is sent from God ; and for Proof of this should appeal to the *Miracles* He performs : and should only repeat one Work ; only walk upon Water ; or cure one particular Distemper ; &c. I ask, whether there would not be more cause of Suspicion that he had some Art or Trick no Man else knew of, than if the World should see him not only do those, but turn Water into Wine ; cure all manner of Diseases ; cast out Devils ; raise the Dead ; and, on ev'ry occasion, exert a Power above our Conception ? And will not this, and ought it not to be an *advantage* on his side ? Or, why may not this be insisted on ; if others have not given so great and abundant assurance, as this Person, that they had truly a power to do *Miracles* ? To proceed,

Secondly, A great number of *Miracles*, of different sorts and kinds, do, in my Opinion, demonstrate a more *comprehensive* and *extensive* Power ; and therefore a *greater*: which you often deny. It cannot be prov'd, as I know of, that He that can, with the Assistance of any *Being*, walk upon the Water, or turn Water into Wine ; can also, with the Assistance of that same *Being*, cure all Diseases, feed Thousands with a few Loaves, or raise the Dead : because it cannot be shewn, that a Power that can do
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the first of these, can also do them all. Now in a contest, or opposition, certainly that Person must be said to act by the *superiour Power*, who not only does Works of the same sort with those the other Person performs; but Miracles of all other sorts, on ev'ry occasion: because He plainly acts by a *more extensive Power*, i. e. a *greater*. But, what is so plain, that I wonder to find You say nothing to it is, what I shall observe,

Thirdly, That, in a *Contest* or *Opposition* between two Persons, *more Miracles* do plainly shew a *greater power* on one side than on the other. If one Person goes on to work a *Miracle*, which the other will not be persuaded to attempt; or cannot perform when He does attempt it: this is a plain demonstration that there is a *Power* on that side, that either performs what the other cannot; or else is of force enough to hinder the other in what He designs, and attempts to do; i. e. it is a demonstration of a *greater power* on one side, than on the other. Thus, if in a contest one Person turns *Dust into Lice*; and the other attempts it, and cannot do it: tho' He has done a *Miracle* before in opposition to him, yet He must yield. For the Question is, not whether it be not as easie for him to turn *Dust into Lice*, as to do what He has done before: (which you often insinuate, p. 60, 265, &c.) but, whether it does not argue a *greater power* on one side than the other, that one has the *continuance* of the power of working Miracles, when the other attempts it, and cannot do it? Does not this shew a *Power* on one side, able to controul and hinder that on the other, i. e. a *greater*? I believe I need not add any more: so shall conclude this Argument with observing, that I cannot think, unless our *Blessed Lord* had been of opinion that there was a great difference between *Himself*, and all *others* who had ever appeared in the World, with respect to the *greatness* and *number* of his *Miracles*, that He would have said, as He does,

does, *Jo. 15. 24. If I had not done amongst them the Works that no man has done, they had not had Sin, i. e. so great an aggravation of their Infidelity.*

And now having shewn (I'm sure to my own entire satisfaction, till I hear somewhat more against it than I have yet) that there is a difference in *Miracles*, as to their *Greatness*; and that *many Miracles* give a Person an *advantage* over one who works but *one*, or a *few*: I may the more securely reassume the Subject that engag'd me to prove this, and the more safely maintain, that God may permit *wicked Spirits* to work *Miracles*, in opposition to Himself, and the Truth; since He can make this apparent difference between the Person on whose part He acts, and the other; and since, because He *can*, therefore, I may be sure, He *will*. You ask, I remember, in one place, (*p. 211.*) *who told me so?* I answer, Reason assures me of it: as it assures me that God will not suffer the World to be distracted in so concerning a Matter, or his Creatures *to be tempted above what they are able*; that He is obliged by his Justice and Goodness to set such plain marks on the side He espouses, as that any considering Person may presently see which it is.

These are the *Foundations*, and the main *Strokes*, of that *Scheme* I thought fit to represent to You, in order to shew that You had not so much reason to reject it, as You seem to think, You have: which is what I shall endeavour to do, by proving, as I propos'd,

Secondly, That this *Scheme* may be maintain'd without the least prejudice to *true Religion*. And this, I think, will clearly appear, if we apply what has been said, to *Moses*, and *Jesus Christ*, whom we both acknowledge to be sent of God.

And 1st. Suppose the *Magicians*, who were sent for by *Pharaoh*, did work *true Miracles*, (or *Works* that could not be *distinguish'd* from *True Miracles*,) by
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the assistance of the *Devil*; what ill Consequence follows from hence, if *Moses* plainly demonstrates that He acts by a *Power* superiour to that by which *They* act: as, I think, He does? What, if *their Rods* are, to all appearance, turn'd into *Serpents*, as well as *His*? Yet, since *His* *Serpent* shews more *Strength and Power* than *Theirs*; it shews more *Power* in the *Cause* that produced it, the others not having *Power* to resist it. But You acknowledge no Sign of Superiority in this Victory obtain'd over the other *Serpents*, (p. 32, &c.) Therefore I ask, why was this Circumstance added by *God* to the Miracle of *Moses*? And, till I have a better Answer, I must think it was, to make a difference between *Moses* whom He sent, and the *Magicians* who oppos'd him; and, if so, it gives him an apparent advantage over 'em. You your self give me leave to suppose, that *Moses* turn'd a vast Quantity of Water into *Blood*, more than the *Magicians*, (p. 30.) and brought up more *Frogs* than they. I have before spoke my Mind, that in a Contest this ought to be look'd on as an Argument of a Superiour Power assisting him, &c. (Supr. p. 10.) But the main thing is yet behind. Suppose they did work *Miracles* in opposition to *Moses*: yet if *Moses* works more than they can; here is a sufficient demonstration that the *Power* that sent Him is superiour to any *Power* that dares oppose Him. Here is a continuance of the *Power* of working *Miracles*, to Him, when the *Magicians* attempt, and cannot go on. And which of the Spectators would not presently see (as I have observ'd before) that there was a *Power* on his side, that could either do what the *Power* on the other side could not; or could hinder that *Power* from working when it pleas'd: i.e. that the greater *Power* was on his side? As themselves were forc'd to acknowledge, when they saw themselves controll'd and stopp'd. But You say, p. 264. That their at-

tempting to go on, is a certain Token that they were ignorant of any Power they had to do Miracles. I think that, if they had not, in times before, done very strange things by their Enchantments, and things which the Spectators could not distinguish from True Miracles; Pharaoh would never have call'd 'em to oppose Moses: which it is plain He did. And the Scripture-History says, what they did, they did by their Incantments. But You give your reason, Had they known what they could do, they might also have known what they could not do; and, consequently, would have never attempted it. But, I think, that they might be of Opinion they should perform this, as well as what they had already done, without knowing exactly how far the Power of that Being, whose Ministers they were, extended; and they might know how far their Power extended, and yet not know (nay, the Devil himself might not know) exactly, when a Superiour Being would think fit to interpose so as to hinder their working. And, methinks, this Scheme gives a more natural and obvious Interpretation to the Words of Moses, than that You affix to 'em, by not allowing Moses any Superiority over the Magicians, but what arises from their own Acknowledgment, *i. e.* none at all, if they had chanc'd to have been as harden'd and refractory as their Master. I cannot think the Historian had the least Suspicion that they did their Miracles by the Power of God; because it is so remarkable a Circumstance of the Story, that He would not have omitted it, but would have recorded it in plainer Terms than, *This is the Finger of God*: which ev'ry Body is presently led to interpret as their Acknowledgment, that Moses did act by a Power superiour to their Power; and that they could oppose him no longer. It is no matter, whether the turning Dust into Lice be as easie as the other Miracles or no: (which You insist on so often.) Their being
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controll'd and stop'd, demonstrated to 'em, there was a *Power Superiour* to that by which they acted. Upon the whole, then, I cannot see how this Opinion does the least prejudice to the Cause of *Moses*.

It is easie to shew the same, with respect to our *Blessed Lord*, and his *Disciples*. What, if *Simon Magus* did perform *things* not to be distinguish'd by the People from true *Miracles*, as I think very probable, because all the People of Samaria gave heed to Him, from the least to the greatest, saying, this Man is the great *POWER* of God, Acts 8. But, what if he did? If the Providence of God orders it so, that St. Philip is brought to the same place; and there shews forth such *Miracles* and *Signs*, as *Simon* cannot pretend to equal: If there be so apparent a difference between 'em, that *Simon* himself (as well as all the *Samaritans*) confesses a greater *Power* with *Philip*, than He can pretend to; where is the great harm to Religion from this Supposition? And though He could work some *Miracles* before; yet, seeing greater and more wrought by *Philip*, this might make him so far a Christian as to own a greater *Power* on *Philip's* side, and to desire to partake of that *Power*: which He could not do, without pretending to believe, as we find in the same Chapter, Act. 8. 29. And, suppose *False Christs* may do great *Signs* and *Wonders*; I see no ill consequence to Christianity from hence: for, at the same time, I am sure, as I can be of any such thing, that there shall be so great a difference in the *Miracles* wrought; in the quality and greatness, and the number of 'em; that the *Elect*, the true serious Christian, cannot be at a loss to determine on which side God is. Nor can an instance be brought of any who have actually oppos'd Christ, in which, supposing they have wrought *Miracles*, this difference will not be very apparent, when you put 'em in the Scale against a long series of *Miracles* of all kinds, wrought by a *Power* uncontroll'd; and, at last,

last, the *Person* who wrought 'em, rais'd from the dead. This, I think, *Reason* tells me, I may always expect: and therefore, I may safely adhere to the natural and obvious Sense of that Text, *Matth. 24. 24.* which you are forced to give up as an *obscure* place, merely because you maintain the contrary. Whereas, I must observe, that these words are as plain, as any that say our *Blessed Lord* himself did *Miracles*; that the expressions are the same that are us'd to signify our *Lord's Miracles*, and those of his *Apostles*, as will appear to any who considers *Acts 8. 13. Job. 20. 30. Acts 2. 22. Mark 16. 20. Acts 14. 3. Heb. 2. 4.* which You your self quote, p. 155, &c. But tho' You cannot fix upon any other, yet You reject this interpretation, *because it consists not with the other Scriptures, nor with Christ's purpose, nor is reasonable*, p. 218. which is charge enough indeed, if it could be made out. But I see no such thing from what You have already said. No other *Scriptures* say, God will never permit any such thing. I suppose the *Scriptures* you mean, are those You quote, to show that *Christ's Miracles* were design'd to prove *Him* sent from God: and that they most certainly do, though *true Miracles* should be wrought in opposition to Him. How it is *inconsistent with Christ's Purpose*, I know not. He plainly designs only to give his Followers warning that such a thing would be; that the *Devil* would exert all his Force against Him, that they might not be surpriz'd when it happen'd. But you say it is *unreasonable*. And indeed I grant it is, as you represent it: for this runs through your whole Representation of it, that these *False Christs* shall work the *same Miracles*, (p. 181.) and as great *Miracles*, to overthrow the *Christian Faith*, as *Christ and his Apostles* wrought to plant it, (p. 183, 211, &c.) But it is far otherwise. Though You acknowledge no difference in *Miracles*: yet, I think, in representing the Sense of others, You should have remembered,

bred, *they* did; and that they who interpret this Text in a different manner from You, do maintain, that there will be a great *difference* in the *greatness*, and *number* of the *Miracles*, sufficient to determine any Serious Person on which side the *Superiour Power* acts. It is their Opinion, that the *Miracles* of *Christ* are to be consider'd as an uninterrupted *Series* of Wonders, wrought by a Person who never was controll'd, or hinder'd; who had not any one mark of God's displeasure upon him; who himself was rais'd from the dead; and sent down a visible Power from above, upon his Followers: And, with these considerations, as they will prefer him to any, who has ever appear'd in the World yet: so they doubt not of a great and apparent *Victory* (in case of opposition) over any *worker* of *Miracles*, who shall ever appear hereafter. But You endeavour to represent this interpretation as absurd, by bringing an example of a Person, who gives the same warning to his Followers, with respect to *Reason*, that you say *others* suppose our *Lord* to give, with respect to *Miracles*. Now, I pray, If (for example) the Doctrine taught, be, *that Men ought to pay Religious Worship only to God, and not to Saints or Angels*: Can there be *equal reason* for, and against this, as you suppose? And would it be absurd for any to forewarn his Scholars, that, though this Doctrine is so *reasonable*, yet, there would arise some, who should offer *Arguments* against it; and deceive a great many; and themselves, if they did not seriously look to the bottom of the matter? Otherwise than this, we would not, any more than you, make our *Blessed Lord* argue: and no otherwise do we interpret his words in this place. We make him not say, as You represent us, that *False Christs* should work the same course of *Miracles* as He had done: but that they should, in opposition to Him, work *some Miracles*. And we say, He forewarns them of this, that they

may be prepar'd to examine them when they appear ; and declares they shall not be such as *can deceive the Elect*, i. e. that there shall be such a difference, that any serious Christian shall see that *God is on his side*. But you say, according to this, *a Man may part with his Christianity, upon the score of Miracles wrought to prove it false, as fairly as He took it up upon the score of Miracles wrought to prove it true*, p. 196. Still You suppose an equality in the case of *Miracles*, on both sides : which they do not, who maintain the Opinion You condemn. And I say, as to *Miracles*, I embrac'd the Christian Religion, upon the score of a *long uninterrupted Series of great Miracles* : therefore, I cannot part with it, on the score of a *few Miracles*, or *Miracles* that do not shew so great a *Power*. This, I think, a just way of proceeding. But even supposing an equality in the *Miracles on both sides* (which I do not grant by any means) a serious considering Person would not let this influence him so far as to part with his *Christianity*. For *Miracles* are not the only Argument for it : (as You acknowledge, p. 199.) nor ought ever to be consider'd so, by any who write on that Subject. And therefore, I say, since I believe *Jesus Christ was the Son of God*, not only because He did these *Miracles* : but because He exactly *fulfill'd* all the former *Prophecies* which the Jews had been taught to understand of their *Messiah* ; because He taught so excellent a *Doctrine* ; and because He was so perfectly *good and holy* Himself ; I cannot part with this belief, *only* on the score of *Miracles*. But this I only say upon supposition. You see, by what I have said, why it is, that I cannot think this *Scheme inconsistent with Religion* ; or, imagine any *prejudice* from it to the *Miracles of Moses and Christ* ; or the Pretences and Doctrines established upon 'em.

III. Give me leave now to examine those *Reasons* upon which you have rejected other *Schemes* ;
and

and advanced your own : and to answer some *Questions* You ask upon this Subject.

The Great Reason I meet with, is, because *to work a Miracle is to unsettle the course of nature. Now no Power less than that of God can unsettle that establish'd course of nature, which no Power less than his could settle and establish,* p. 8, 10. If you could plainly demonstrate this, the whole dispute must be at an end. But I cannot think, it can ever be made out, that a *Being* that has not that *Wisdom* and *Power* that was required to settle ev'ry thing, Earth, Water, Air, Sun, Moon, Stars, Animals, &c. in that Order and *Disposition*, and *exact Regularity*, in which they are, may not (for all this) have *Power* enough to support a Body from sinking, in the *Water*, or the *Air* ; or *Power* enough to alter the particles of *Water*, so as to make it *Wine* : nor can it, I believe, be ever shewn, that the *Angels* who were created to be God's *Ministers*, were not created with *Power* and *Understanding* enough to do some such things ; which cannot properly be call'd *unsettling the course of Nature*, any more than some of the *Operations* of Men, performed by the visible *Application* of corporeal means. But, p. 10. You give two Reasons, (which You often insist upon afterwards.)

1st. *Because this would be for God to leave the Laws of his Creation at the Will and Mercy of created beings ; and to have Rivals, and Cheques, of his Will and Empire.* But I cannot think so. The good *Beings* will make use of this *Power* only by his *Command* : and the bad ones cannot, without his *Permission*. He has 'em under his eye, and can controll 'em when he sees fit : as he can do Man, in the Exercise of any Powers he has given him. This is not to believe, *they can be wrought by ev'ry wanton and malicious Spirit, whenever They please* : as you mean, p. 209.

2. Another Reason You give, p. 10. is, *because there could no use be made of Miracles, if any but God could*

work 'em. Thus also, p. 38. p. 91. and other Places : *i. e.* they would not be an Argument of a *divine Power* present with the worker. Now, there is no need they should all be certain Arguments of *perfect Power*. And I have said before what is sufficient to shew that there may be such a difference in the *Miracles*, (in case of an opposition which we are now considering,) that it may not be difficult to determine on which side *Almighty God* is. *Good Spirits* never interpose to do any thing wonderful within our view, but by *God's Command and Appointment* : and when He orders them to interpose, He will take care that they shall come off with Victory ; and how that may be, I have shewn before.

Besides, how often soever you call it *begging the Question*, I cannot forbear thinking that I can judge on whose side *God* is, by the Doctrine taught. For I know, as well as I know any thing, that *God* will not work a *Miracle* for one who teaches a Doctrine, in any respect, unworthy of *Him* : and I know, the *Devil* will not do any thing to establish the Authority of a Person, who teaches the Will of *God*, in the Matter of Religion. And therefore when *Miracles* are wrought for the one, I'm sure *God* is on that side ; when for the other, I'm sure they are not from *Him*. But of this, somewhat more by and by. At present, I observe, that the Scheme I defend, does not leave us without reasonable grounds, upon which we may judge on whose side *Almighty God* acts, and which is his *Seal* : For tho' the *Devil's Seal* may resemble *His* ; yet we do not say, it shall be exactly the same, as you suppose, p. 12. but that there shall be a manifest difference. But, suppose any Person should have the Use of the same Seal with his Prince : yet I could never believe the Prince himself had set it, if I should see it set to a *Writing* that exhorts me to a Rebellion against this same Prince. The Tendency

dency of that Writing would be an infallible Rule to go by, in that Matter.

To your *Questions* about the *Miracles* of *Moses*, and the *Magicians*, p. 89, 90. I answer. To the first, *Whether the Finger of God was not as much seen in Moses's turning the Rod into a Serpent, &c. as in turning the Dust into Lice?* That, tho' there was an *Advantage* on *Moses's* side, (in my Opinion) in the whole procedure; yet, it did not appear so manifestly and undeniably, before *Moses* turn'd the *Dust* into *Lice*, and the *Magicians* attempted it, and were not able to perform it: I say, it did not till then appear so undeniably, that the *Finger of God* was with *Moses*, or, that the *Power* by which He acted was superiour to the *Power* that oppos'd his Demands. This was the thing in dispute, and this appear'd most manifestly, when they, who were brought forth to confront him, were controll'd and hinder'd from doing what He did. To the second, *Whether the Magicians did not see the Finger of God as much in their own Works, as in the first Works of Moses?* I answer: The *Magicians* do not say, they saw the *Finger of God* in those first *Works* of *Moses*; tho' they could not but see an *Advantage* on his side. But, when they attempted to do what He did, and could not; then it is, and not till then, that they are so thoroughly convinc'd, that they cannot help acknowledging the *Superiour Power* on his side, To the third; *Whether the Magicians would have attempted the fourth Miracle, if they had thought the Finger of God more necessary to the performing of that, than to the performing the former?* I answer, No body says they did think so, as I know of. But I say, they attempted the *Fourth Miracle*, because they thought they should succeed as they had done before; and because they did not know, that a *Power* superiour to theirs would interpose, and hinder the *Power* which acted by them from working. To the Fourth: *Whether therefore, when they*

they acknowledg'd the Finger of God in the works of Moses, they did not also effectually acknowledge that the same Power had wrought by themselves, those three great works? I answer, That it does not appear, that they acknowledg'd any thing, but that a greater Power commission'd Moses, than that they acted by; and this was so evident, they could not deny it. These, and, I think, all the other Questions You ask on the Subject of Miracles, I have in effect answer'd, as well as I could, in what I have laid down before.

I shall only beg your Patience a little longer, while I mention two or three other things; in which I cannot but dissent from You, till I have farther satisfaction.

1st, You say over and over again, it is down-right begging the question (p. 169, &c.) to consider the Doctrine before the Miracles; and to judge of the Miracles by the Doctrine. This I know not how to agree to. For, tho' in the case of Jesus Christ, I make the same consequence you do (p. 168.) that his Doctrine is true, because it was prov'd, establish'd, and confirm'd by Miracles: yet I do this, as I consider that series of Miracles, of all sorts, which He wrought by a power uncontroll'd, and unoppos'd; and, last of all, his own Resurrection, Ascension, sending of the Holy Spirit. For I argue, that it is not imaginable, that God would permit any Person to go on with so unrestrain'd a Power; and put no mark of disgrace upon him, but many of his favour; if this Person taught a Doctrine contrary, in any respect, to his Nature and Attributes. I say, tho' I can reason this way, and very much to my satisfaction, in the Case of Jesus Christ: yet I could not, in the case of a Person who work'd one, or a few Miracles. But indeed, I am fully perswaded the Method you condemn is reasonable. To beg the question, is to take the thing for granted that is to be prov'd. Now, as I take it, the thing to be prov'd is, that Jesus was sent of God. Now, I desire

desire to know, if the *being* and *attributes* of God are not suppos'd to be known from *Reason*, before any *Revelation*? I desire to know, if I must not have as much proof that this Person comes from an *holy Being*, as that he comes from a *powerful one*? And, tho' His teaching never so *reasonable* a *Doctrine* will not prove, He comes from God, or, has an *extraordinary* Commission from Him to teach it: yet His teaching an *unreasonable* *Doctrine*; his making God an Encourager of Vice, or Discourager of Virtue; is a greater evidence that he *cannot* come from God, than the doing of a *Miracle* can be that He does: to all, I mean, who think that a *power less* than God's may do some of those things we acknowledge *Miracles*, and who cannot separate *holiness* from the Notion of God. Suppose our Lord cur'd the *Paralytic*, to shew He had an extraordinary Commission to *forgive sins*; (as You say, p. 169.) If this pretense of his had had any absurdity in it, no *Miracle* could have prov'd it true. And this instance proves nothing contrary to what I am defending, *viz.* That the excellent and reasonable precepts of *Religion* and *Morality*, our Lord taught, are so necessary an argument, that if He had wanted it, we could not acknowledge him *sent of God*. But you say, at this rate *Miracles* would prove nothing that was doubtful or unknown before, p. 170. In the case before us, the thing to be prov'd is, that *Jesus is sent from God*: and this was *unknown before*. *Miracles* are one argument to prove this. But, if there be any thing in his *Doctrine*, *absurd*; or *contrary* to the *Notions* of God, *Reason* teaches us, and the matter before us supposes already in the World; nothing can prove it. And therefore, we may and ought to look into the *Doctrine* any Person teaches, who pretends He comes from God. And, tho' I find You differ from me, yet I cannot but think, that there was no *fundamental* Error in the *Pharisees*, in point of *Judgment*; but all down-

down-right *Malice*. When they attributed our Lord's *Miracles* to the *Devil*, they seem to me to own, Our Lord wrought *true Miracles*. They could not but see the nature of the *Doctrine* He taught; and the *Holy Life* He led: yet they blasphemously asserted, He did them by the *help* of the *Devil*. You grant Your self, the *Pharisees* thought the *Devil* could do *Miracles*: and our Lord's answer does not lay that to their charge, as *their fundamental error*, as You do, p. 165. but rather supposes it true; and only lays before them the horrid, and groundless absurdity of making the *Devil* act against his own interest. So that He did in effect invite 'em to examine his *Doctrine*, as well as his *Miracles*; in order to determine, whether He acted by the *Holy Spirit* of God, or the *Devil*, that *wicked Spirit*. Now, because the Persons You dissent from, are of opinion that the *Devil* can work a *Miracle*; therefore it is, they think, they must look to the *Doctrine*, and to the *Tendency* of it, before they can Judge, whether this *Miracle* was wrought by God or the *Devil*. And the design of the *Miracle*, done by the *Power of God*, is, not to prove, that the *Doctrine* is *worthy of God*; but that He is so much concern'd about it, as to send a Person in an *extraordinary* manner to teach it.

2. I cannot so well see the necessity there is for our *Blessed Lord* to declare his Pretences before He began to work *Miracles*: as You argue, p. 222. and 227. Indeed, when a Person has but *one* or a *few Miracles* to perform, there may come into the Minds of Men a Suspicion, that He takes advantage of a lucky Event, or strange Accident, to improve it to the increase of his own Authority: unless He declares before-hand, what it is He pretends to. But when a Person has a *long, and continued course of Miracles of all sorts* to go through, there cannot possibly be such a suspicion in the Minds of Men.

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Since our Lord, therefore, had so long a Series of Works to perform ; and had all other Arguments necessary to prove him the *Messiah*: I see no Obligation upon him to *declare himself plainly the Messiah*, before He began. And, as there was no necessity for it : so I think it was what He sollicitously avoided at first ; and what He enjoin'd his Disciples to keep from divulging in the World, even after He had done many *Miracles*. The Texts You produce, p. 227. are not convincing : and I could produce plain Texts that prove what I here say.

3. Nor can I see the Necessity of our *Blessed Lord's* declaring before-hand that He would work *Miracles*: (as You argue, p. 263, 272.) for the reason before-given, because He had not *one or two Miracles* to work ; but many and great *Miracles*, before the Eyes of all Examiners, sufficient to satisfy the World, beyond all doubt, that He did not take an Advantage of an Accident, or lucky Event, to increase his own Authority. The Text You produce (*Joh. 6. 6.*) says only, in one case, that He knew before-hand what he should do ; not that He declared it : And this was remark'd by the *Historian*, not as an *advantageous Circumstance* of the *Miracle* ; but only as He was giving some Account why our Lord ask'd Philip that Question, *Whence shall we buy Bread that these may eat ?* Here I cannot but observe, that our Lord's commanding the Sea into a Calm, may be insisted on to an Infidel as a great *Miracle*, (not only because a violent Storm cannot be suppos'd of it self, to sink in a moment, into a Calm : but) as the Work of a Person, who gave the utmost Evidence, that He did not take Advantages of lucky Events ; and as a Work that is an Argument of a greater Power (as I think) than walking on the Water, or changing a small Quantity of it into Wine. Tho' You are not for insisting upon this, p. 142. Yet I cannot see why,
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under this Consideration, it should not be of great Account.

4. One thing more is, that I cannot think your Account of the Disciples *not dispossessing the Lunatick* (p. 274, &c.) right. You say, *they did not attempt it*, and (p. 275.) You say, the reason was *because they found themselves distrustful of the Event*: And yet, You make 'em come to their Lord, and ask, *Why could not we cast out the Devil*, i. e. according to You, *Why did not we attempt it?* The Reason of which they very well knew themselves, had been their *Distrust*. According to this Account, they should rather ask, *Why had we such a Distrust as not to attempt it?* But then, in our Lord's Answer, *Unbelief* must not signify this *Distrust*: as You say it plainly does.

But, It is time for me to release you. I am sorry to find my Thoughts, and the Thoughts of many serious Persons, so different from Yours on this Subject. But since they are so; I could not think it amiss to accept your Invitation, and represent 'em to you: and have done it, I hope, *in a manner becoming my self, and You*. If they engage You to resume this Subject, and give it a farther Examination; the World will think it self, perhaps, obliged to me for giving you this disturbance. If they appear to You not to deserve your regard; I shall still have this Satisfaction, that I design'd no Injury to You, and some Good to others. I assure You, it was not my Judgment only, that something ought to be said on this occasion; or, that what I have said is to the purpose. If I have mistaken You in any thing, I am sure it is not wilfully: and I shall readily acknowledge my Error, as soon as I am inform'd of it. I have no more; only to beg of you to believe, that no one has a greater respect for you than I;
and

and that no one prays God more heartily to preserve You long a Blessing to these Parts. And so I take leave.

F I N I S.

Advertisement.

MR. Locke, in the Discourse upon Miracles, (*which He left imperfect,*) blames the Author of this Letter for writing upon Miracles, without defining what a Miracle is. I presume that He would not have done this, upon second Thoughts, had he but consider'd, that this was never design'd as a complete Treatise upon the Subject: but as a Debate between Two Persons, who both believ'd the same Works to be Miracles; and only differ'd about the Agent who might perform them, and the Powers requisite to the performance; and the like. This is a very different Case: and plainly makes the Definition of a Miracle here, to be unnecessary.

II.

A LETTER
TO A
Clergy-Man
IN THE
COUNTRY,
Concerning the
Votes of the BISHOPS
Upon the BILL against
OCCASIONAL CONFORMITY.

Written in the Year, 1703.

II

A LETTER

TO A

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Written in the Year, 1703.

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A
LETTER
 TO A
CLERGY-MAN
 IN THE
COUNTRY, &c.

LONDON, *November* 12. 1703.

S I R,

I DO not remember, that, through the whole Course of that long *Friendship*, with which you have been pleased to favour me, I ever found so great an occasion of differing from you, as your last Letter afforded me. You seem to have laid aside that *Candor* and *Temper*, that used to give so great an agreeableness to all your Notions, and Judgments; and to be entirely possessed with an aversion to some of the *Fathers* of our *Church*: whose Conduct, after all the Consideration, I am able to exercise, I see not any reason to condemn; and whose Persons I must ever have in the highest Veneration. I can attribute this to nothing, but the different Representations we may have had, and the different Views set before our Eyes; according to the different Sentiments of those with whom we

are surrounded, and with whom we most frequently converse. I am so fully satisfy'd of your impartial Love to *Truth*, that no difference in Opinion, can ever alter my Esteem, and Friendship, for you. But, in the mean while, I think it one great part of that Friendship to which I pretend, to lay before you the Reasons upon which I form my Opinion in this Case: that so I may either enjoy the satisfaction of having my Thoughts confirmed by your Approbation; or else induce you, effectually to shew me the weakness of those Arguments, on which I rely. I heartily wish that our difference may end in *Agreement*: But whether by your coming over to me, or by my coming over to you; if I know my self, I can assure you, is an equal matter to me.

You severely blame the Conduct of *my Lords*, the *Bishops*, who, in the last Session of *Parliament*, insisted upon those *Amendments* to the *Bill* concerning *Occasional Conformity*, which hindred the passing of it: And you seem, at present, thoroughly persuaded, that they have shewn themselves no true Friends to the *Ecclesiastical Establishment*; and acted against the Interest of *Episcopacy*, and that *Church* in which they preside. And you add the general Consent of your Neighbours, and the *Universal Cry* of the Nation against them. I am, on the contrary, at present, fully persuaded, that they have neither acted against the Interest of *Episcopacy*, nor of the *Established Church*. And the Reasons why I think that they ought not to be condemned in this part of their Conduct, will appear from what I am now going to offer to you. As for the *Universal Cry* against their *Lordships*, and this especially in *Coffee-Houses*, and *Taverns*; I shall not, in the least, be moved by it, till I am convinc'd, that *Noise* and *Clamour* are Marks of *Truth*; or that the greatest Frequenters of those Places are generally Persons of the coolest Heads, and the most disinterested Affections. But, to come to the Point,

I do here suppose the Truth of what their greatest Enemies, at this time, lay to their Charge; that their *Lordships* were entirely against the passing of such a Bill against *Occasional Conformity*; and only made use of the *Amendments* they proposed, in order to put a stop to the passing of it. Taking this for granted; yet there hath hitherto appeared to me something in the following *Considerations*, that hath persuaded me, not only to be very backward in my Censures, but even to applaud their *Conduct* upon this Occasion. And

I. I considered the *Time*, at which this *Bill* was proposed. Now, that some *Times* and *Seasons* would be very improper, and extremely unfit, for an Attempt of this Nature, is, I think, granted on all Hands. One might name a very terrible *Season*, not out of the Memory of the present Generation, in which few *Church-men* would, I believe, have thought it proper to shew their Zeal against the *Dissenters*, by attempting any thing that might inflame us against one another, or endanger the one common Interest. Our Danger is not, indeed, so imminent, and so threatening, as it was at that time. But certainly, considering how powerful an Enemy we have abroad, supporting the Pretenses of a *Popish Prince* to these Kingdoms; considering what Commotions there are in a neighbouring Nation; considering how many secret, and designing Adversaries we have within our own Bosom, who hate the *present Establishment*; considering how little regard there is left, to the Memory of that Prince who delivered us from our *former Dangers*, or to any thing established by him; and considering how small a degree of Charity, and mutual Love there appears amongst us: can we think our selves so secure, and so far removed from *Danger*, that we may now safely give new occasions of *Variance* and *Strife* to one

another; and sow fresh Seeds of *Discord* in the Land? Our *Enemies* abroad are very powerful; and very cunning; very formidable in the Field; and skilful enough to manage the Commotions of our Neighbours, and our intestine Divisions, so as best to serve their own Purposes. The great Point they are now labouring, (and which we are opposing) is, to subject us to a *Popish Prince*; and without doubt to rob us of our *Liberties*, and of our *Religion*. And this I take to be a matter of infinitely more concern to every one of us, than the exaltation of any one *Party* among us. We are all at present engaged in the preservation of our *Liberties* and *Religion*; or, at least, we all pretend to be so: And the greatest *mean* of compassing this *End*, next under the good *Providence* of God, is the closest *Union*, and the heartiest *Friendship*, amongst one another. Methinks our Business, at such a *Season*, should be to Design and Effect nothing but what might most conduce to the Preservation of our common *Religion*, and common *Liberties*; and most tend to unite us firmly, and heartily to one another. And I do not hear that it is so much as pretended, that such a *Bill* would, in the least degree, contribute, either to the greater Security of our *Liberties* and *Religion*, against the Invasions of a *Popish Prince*; or to our closer *Union* at Home. Nay, could it be proved, that it had not a natural tendency to incense us against one another, and weaken our common Interest; and, in the end, to endanger what we pretend to be the two dearest and most invaluable Goods we enjoy; I should be as forward as any one to call in question the *Prudence* of my *Lords*, the *Bishops*, tho' not to revile and abuse them.

But had we a more distant prospect of the two greatest *Evils* we can imagine, *Popery* and *Slavery*, than, I fear, we have at present; yet *they* are so terrible things, when compared with the *mischiefs* of
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of *Occasional Communion*, in our present Circumstances, that we cannot be too much afraid of them, or too careful not to act a part, that may possibly contribute to the introducing two such *Evils* amongst us. Many indeed are as secure, and thoughtless, as if there were no shadow of Danger threatening us ; and many make a Jest of these Fears : But this doth not shew the *Safety*, but the *Danger*, of our Condition. And we need not doubt, but that our Adversaries take the greatest Advantages against us, whilst we are *sleeping* in the Thoughts of our own Security. It is certain, I think, that our *Danger* is great and imminent ; and that, if our Enemies prevail against us, our *Loss* and *Misery* are unexpressible. And I think, it used to be an undoubted Maxim, That whatever tends to raise new Uneasinesses and Jealousies in a Nation, gives its *Enemies* a vast advantage over it. And certainly, to give such *Enemies* as ours an advantage, is to pave the way for such *Evils* as we are to expect from them. If then our *Danger* be so terrible ; we ought not to give our *Enemies* the least advantage over us. At least, *They* who are so weak as to think it so much greater than others would seem to do, are obliged in Conscience to beware of every thing that may give them an advantage ; and consequently to oppose whatever tends yet farther to divide and inflame us. And one very considerable thing which helped to confirm me in my Opinion, that this *Bill* might probably prove a very great Disadvantage to our *common Interest* ; and a great Advantage to our *common Enemy*, was this, that I observed it to be extremely agreeable to all, both *Roman Catholics* and *Protestants*, who hate the *present Establishment*. Nothing hath seemed to inspire them of late, with greater *Joy*, or greater *Zeal*, than the hopes of seeing this *Bill* perfected. It cannot be said that the former of these could rejoice at it,

as what would promote the Interest of a *Church*, against which their chief *Zeal* seems to lie ; but only purely, as they imagined that at the end it might prove of pernicious Consequence to the *Protestant* Interest ; and serve at last to help forward the Ruine of the *Church* of *England*. Of the latter it may perhaps be said, that their *Joy* and *Zeal* may probably be founded upon their *Love* to this *Church*. If it should be so, yet they seem to understand the true Interest of this *Church* as little as any Men whatever. And, to speak what I think, their Minds at present seem to be so taken up with the *State*, that the *Church* finds little room in their Thoughts, unless as it can be subservient to their main Design ; and that they could not possibly be zealous for this *Bill*, if they apprehended it of the least advantage to the present *Establishment*. And I cannot but think, that the concern for this *Bill*, so apparent in those who hate our present *Establishment*, ought to make us very suspicious of the influence it may have on the present State of Affairs.

Supposing, therefore, that this *Bill* had been very much for the present advantage, and exaltation of the *Church* of *England*, (the truth of which Supposition I shall by and by more carefully examine ;) yet it naturally tended so much to disunite us, in our Hearts and Affections, from one another, and to introduce so much Passion and Violence amongst us, that probably it must, in the end, have proved an Advantage to our worst *Enemies* ; and so, very Disadvantageous and Fatal to the *Church* of *England* it self. They are most likely to bring about the Ruine of this excellent *Church*, who separate the Interest of it from the Interest of the *Nation*. For it is not possible, that what is contrary to the Interest of the *whole*, can promote the Interest of a part. And so, if *this* be against the Interest of the whole, by dividing us yet more, and laying us
more

more open to the common Enemy ; it cannot be said to be for the Interest of the *Church of England* at the end. At a time, therefore, when all we can do is not more than sufficient to save our selves from *Popery* and *Arbitrary Power*, it cannot be an advantage to this *Church*, that the *Nation* should be divided and inflamed ; because this, as it may tend to the Ruine of the *Nation* ; so will it as certainly, to the Ruine of this *Church*. And it is a *Zeal*, little favouring of *Knowledge* or *Prudence*, to prefer the present Depression of *Dissenters*, before the future Health of the *Church* and *Nation* ; to buy the present Prosperity of the *Church* at the price of the danger of the Protestant Religion and our Civil Liberties. And it would be a fatal way of revenging our selves upon the *Dissenters* ; if, when they would not join in ruining the *Church*, at a time when they must have been ruined with it, we should depress and irritate *them*, at a time when it must tend to the Ruine of our own Liberties, and the *Church* we so much admire. This is indeed to *hate* the *Dissenters* : But it is not to *love* the *Church* ; the Interest of which is most consulted, at such a time, by making it one with the Interest of the whole *Nation*.

And, besides that this *Act* is proposed at a Time very improper on the forementioned Accounts ; so should I be apt to think, that it might be more for the Glory and Advantage of *Her most Excellent Majesty's* Reign, to let things continue in their former peaceable Estate, than to begin with something so very ungrateful to many of her good Subjects : That, as upon the Revolution, the last Reign began with an *Act* in favour of the *Dissenters*, (tho' that was no more in favour of them, than what was reasonable in it self, and what is acknowledged to be due to them by the Doctrine of the Christian Religion, and particularly of the *Church of England* ;) so in the beginning of her Majesty's auspicious Reign, no *Act* might pass, that

that should allarm and discompose the Minds of her People ; unless an absolute necessity could be shewn for it. And were I a Person concerned, I should be afraid of promoting any thing, at the entrance of a *glorious Princess* upon her Government, that might either cast a Cloud over the *present Triumphs* of her Subjects, or be an hindrance to the *future Glories* promised in it.

I know it is urged, That *no time could be more seasonable for this Bill, because the Church was now in no danger of Popery, or Fanaticism ; that good Laws are to be made for Posterity, and may be obtained most easily in the best Reigns.* Now, I confess, my Head is so turn'd, as to argue on the contrary ; that if the Church be in no danger from the *Dissenters*, or particularly from the *Occasional Conformists*, after the Practice of *Occasional Conformity* for forty Years ; and if there be some other weighty Considerations to make it improper at this time ; then there is nothing to outweigh these other Considerations. For no one can think this an Argument, *The Church is now in no danger from Occasional Conformity ; therefore we will pass a Bill against the Practice.* It is usually thought that *Necessity* only can answer for doing what must needs raise Divisions and Animosities, in time of great Danger from a common Enemy. But here is no *necessity* to be pretended : No, not the least, if the Church be not in danger from this *Practice*. Nor can it be said or proved, that it will certainly be Endangered or Ruined by it in Times to come. For the *present Security* of it here acknowledged, is a greater Presumption *against* such a Supposition, than can be brought for it. And supposing there were some *Presumptions* to be alleged for the future Ruine of the Church : Yet if all things at present, after so many Years trial, appear safe and secure, it is not a prudential Rule, to do what hath a certain present ill Effect, for fear of an *uncertain future Evil*.

Evil. *Good Laws* indeed are to be made for *Posterity*; but the *present Age* is not to provide against the *imagined Evils* of those to come, at the hazard of its own *Peace and Happiness*. The danger of the *present Generation*, is always to be looked upon as the danger of *Posterity*. And we cannot consult *their Interest*, if we forget and ruine our own. And therefore if there be no danger to the Church at present; there may be none, for ought we know, in times to come: Or, if there should be, it is not our *Duty* to provide against all possible future *Evils*, by dividing and weakning our selves. Nor doth it appear to be the *Interest of Posterity*, that we should make *Laws* for them, that may have pernicious Effects in our own Days.

As for the other part of what is alleged for the *seasonableness* of this *Time*, viz. That *the Church is now in no danger from Popery*, I would to God it were true; tho' it would not much help forward this *Bill*. But it is implied in this Argument, That *if the Church be now in danger from Popery*, this is not a *seasonable Time* for Attempts of this Nature. And that it is now in danger from *Popery*, is to me, I profess, as clear, as that we are engaged in a very hazardous and threatening War with a powerful Prince, whose main Design, with respect to *Us*, is to settle either himself, or another *Popish Prince*, in this Throne. It is true, we may have Success: but to say, that we have any reasons to be confident of it; or to say, that we are in no danger from *Popery*, whilst we have such an *Enemy* to contend with, is to *blind our Eyes*, and tell us, *the Sun don't shine*. I'm sure our *Gracious Queen*, who may be presumed to know the present Posture of Affairs, hath expressed other Notions of this Matter; and hath, after a very moving manner, in some of her *Royal Proclamations*, represented to her *People* the great and imminent Danger our Religion is in. And certainly, if the Nation

be in danger from Popish Enemies, the Church must be in danger from Popery; unless we can be so weak, as once more to think the Church secure under the Protection of a Popish Prince. If, therefore, there be no danger, at present, to the Church from Occasional Conformity, as is acknowledged; then there cannot be imagined any Reason, at present, for such a Bill: and, if the Church's Danger from Popery would be a sufficient reason against such a Bill, as is implied in this Argument; then we have manifestly this Reason also against it: for the Church is certainly in Danger from Popery, when the Nation is in the utmost Danger from Popish Enemies.

Thus you see the *Reasons* why I have not been able hitherto to persuade my self, that this is a *seasonable Time* for such a Bill; since it is granted on all hands, that some *Times* would not be *seasonable* for it. And as these Thoughts about the *Time*, have prevented my *Censures* of *my Lords, the Bishops*; and induced me to think, that they have truly consulted the Interest of the Church of England in this part of their *Conduct*: So neither could I possibly join with the *common Cry*, in running them down as *Enemies* to this Church, in which they preside, when I considered,

II. Their *Lordships* past *Behaviour*, and *Characters*. The *Persons* against whom this Cry is, at present, raised, are the *Men* who have been the Chief Defenders of the Church of England against all its Adversaries; and have given the greatest Proofs, at all convenient Seasons, of a steady Affection to it. They have always been ready to vindicate it against the Objections and Calumnies, of the *Romanists* on the one hand; and, on the other hand, they have asserted the lawfulness, and necessity of *constant Communion* against the *Dissenters*, as constantly, and as judiciously as any others whatsoever. They forsook it not in its greatest Danger; and have refused no

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Study or Pains to promote its true Interests. They have not perhaps made their *Pulpits* Places of Rail- ing and Reviling; or spent that time which ought to be employed in recommending Virtue and Holiness, in satyrical Declamations, and incensing their Con- gregation against their Brethren. But they have done more towards the putting a stop to the Spirit of *Separation*, and *Violence*; and to the engaging the *Affections* of Men to this *Church*, than all their *Ene- mies* put together, who think they cannot be *Defen- ders* of the *Church*, without abusing and insulting the *Dissenters*. And what hath always induced me to look upon *them* as true Friends to the *Church* of Eng- land, is, that they have been at all times ready to make it more perfect than it already is, and to strengthen its Interest by yielding up some incon- siderable Points, for the sake of reconciling and healing our Breaches, and mischievous Dissen- sions.

You will wonder that I allege this for their Honour: since it is become so common a *Topick* a- gainst them, That they are the Persons, who have been for *Alterations*, and *Concessions*, in favour of the *Dissenters*. But I cannot help what other Persons think. It is an unaccountable thing to me, that *All* should acknowledge that the *Church* is *not* perfect; and yet it should be a Crime, to endeavour to make it more perfect than it is: That all should acknow- ledge, That an *inconsiderable* and *indifferent* matter ought to be given up, even to the unreasonable De- mands of *weak Brethren*, upon account of something of more Consequence; and yet it should be a *Blot* upon the Reputation of any *Persons*, that they have been ready to yield up an *indifferent* Point to the great Concerns of *Peace* and *Unity*. These things are inconsistent: and, I believe, we cannot gratify the *Romanists* better, than by being afraid of any *Al- terations*, that tend either to unite us more to one a-
nother

nother, or to make the *Church* more perfect than it is; Whilst *They* scruple not daily *Alterations* even for the worse, if so be they can but have the least prospect of advantage from them. It may be against the Interest of some particular Persons, to reconcile the *Dissenters* to our Church: But it cannot be against the Interest of the Church it self; and therefore the *Crime* ought to be resented as an Injury to *Them*, and not to the *Church*. But when any thing is done, disagreeable to the Humors, or Interest of some Men, the *Church* is sure to be brought into the Quarrel; and to be made the Pretence of all the *Oidium* they can cast upon their *Brethren*. But since it is not in the Power of the greatest *Enemies* their *Lordships*, have to produce one single Instance of any *Alteration* promoted by them, which would have affected any valuable part of the whole *Constitution*; or one single Instance, which could possibly have done the least Injury to the *Church of England*; they must pardon me, if I be not alarmed by the bare mention of *Alterations*; or if I cannot but think, that they who are for such *Alterations*, as are either for the better, or in order to some good end, have given greater Proof of their Love to the *Church of England*, than *they* who have been always averse to them. And since they have never shewn themselves inclined to *yield up* any Points, but such as are *indifferent*, by the confession of all; and this upon great and weighty Considerations; their *Lordships* need not be ashamed of the odious appellation of *Moderate Church-men*, nor envy their *Brethren* the contrary Character: unless it be a shame to *Reasonable Creatures*, to set no more value upon things than they deserve; or a glory to *Christians*, to have no more concern for *Peace and Unity*, than if no such things had been ever spoken of in the Gospel.

I must not here forget what is lately, and very terribly represented to the World, That these *Moderate Church-men* are now associated with the *Dissenters*, in order to *undermine, and blow up the present Constitution in Church and State.*

The *Author* of this *Accusation* is, indeed, very zealous, and very vehement, in the Proof of it. But I am persuaded, if we examine things impartially, we shall find the *Accusation* as void of *Truth*, as the whole *Management* of it appears to be void of *Charity.*

The most considerable part of our *Constitution in Church*, this *Author* will easily allow to be, the *Government of it by Bishops superior to Presbyters.* What He may judge to be our *Constitution in State*, I will not now enquire. But our *present Constitution* is, by the unanimous Voice of *Queen, Lords, Commons*, and the whole *Nation*, declared to be the *Settlement of this Government in the Protestant Line of the Royal Family.* As for our *Ecclesiastical Constitution*; this *Accusation* falls out unluckily, because at this very time, (and for some Years past) it happens to be their *Lordships Province* to assert, and maintain the *Rights* of this *Episcopal Church*, against the *Assaults* of Men, who have been formerly the greatest *Advocates* for *Episcopacy*; and accused their *Lordships* of want of Love to it. It was ever given out, and believ'd by their *Enemies*, that, upon such an *Occasion*, their *Lordships* would *discover their Hearts*, and gladly part with the *Rights* of *Episcopacy.* They have, indeed, *discovered their Hearts*, not by betraying *Episcopacy*, but by asserting it to the height; and have forever put an end to that *Calumny*, by denying to give up the *Rights* of an *Episcopal Church*, when they might have done it with so much *Credit*, and were so often, and so importunately, called upon to do it, by the majority of their own *Presbyters.* But some are sure of the *Title of False Brethren*, which way soever they

they act: whilst others may do any thing, and yet be true to the Interest of the Church; and whilst they are destroying it's Rights, may still remain the greatest Lovers of *Episcopacy*. Who have at this time, shewn the greatest Love to *Episcopacy*; these Moderate Church-men, or Those who affect Another Character, let any indifferent Person judge: And therefore, some other Calumny should now, one would think, be sought out; and the *undermining and blowing up the Constitution in Church*, should be cautiously mention'd, for fear of putting People in mind, that we are come to see the Days, in which, *They* who have been represented as *Haters of Episcopacy*, are complained of by their *Enemies*, for carrying the Rights of it too high; and *They*, who have all along made such a noise about it, are found to press hardest upon the Privileges that hitherto have been thought to belong to it. But if this *Accusation* can find any place now; what *Out-cries* might we have expected, had their *Lordships*, in any part of their Lives, acted the part that some others have been acting of late Years?

As to our *Constitution in State*, which *they* are endeavouring, in conjunction with the *Dissenters*, to *undermine and blow up*; this *Author* cannot surely mean, that their *Lordships* are endeavouring to hinder the *Succession* in the *Protestant Line*, and to overthrow the last *Settlement* made by *Act of Parliament*, in which *they* themselves labour'd so much. No, if this were so, he would thank and applaud them, and draw their Characters to greater advantage. And yet this I take to be our *present Constitution*; that which is now established by the greatest Authority in the Nation; and that to which we have all obliged our selves by a solemn Oath. What then is that *Constitution in State* which *They* are *undermining*? It must be either *this*, or the *Succession* in the *Popish Line*. And if it be the *Popish Succession*, as
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is too plain to be denied ; then, God be thanked, *They* are embarked in the same Design with their *Sovereign*, both Houses of *Parliament*, and all who are in any Office, throughout the Nation. If the *Dissenters* be in this same Interest ; it is happy for the Nation : Nor ought it to be accounted their Crime, but to turn to their Advantage. And if it be a Scandal to join with them, in this ; it is a Scandal common to their *Lordships*, with all *Churchmen*, who enjoy any Preferments, and with the whole Nation also. And I should think, that it cannot be a greater Crime for their *Lordships* to join with the *Dissenters* in maintaining this present *Constitution*, with the whole Nation on their Side ; than for some others, in opposition to the whole Nation, to act in conjunction with *Papists*, and enter into *Associations* with the professed Enemies of their Country, in order to maintain that which they call the *Constitution*, and to bring us once more under the Yoke of *Popery*. *They* are associated with *Roman Catholics* in one and the same Design against the *Protestant Establishment* : And they revile their *Lordships* for being in the same Design with *Dissenters*, of maintaining the *Protestant Establishment*, settled by the Voice of the whole Nation. And which of these is the most terrible, and dishonourable *Association*, let the Nation judge. But the *Modesty* of some Men is wonderful : who, in the Face of a *Government*, under the Protection of which they live, can make it their Business openly to expose and revile others, for nothing, but because they are in the same Interests in which the *Government* it self is. I know not well, what the *Expectations* of these Gentlemen are ; or on what they are grounded : but methinks, common Prudence should instruct them to forbear their *Insults* and *Abuses* ; since all the governing part of the Nation, have unanimously professed themselves in the same *State-Party*, in which it is the

Unhappiness of my *Lords* the *Bishops* to be. But perhaps, They know their own *Interest* better than I can do; and think they can never serve *that* more effectually, than by making all those *odious*, whom they suspect to be most hearty against their *Schemes*, and *Machinations*: tho' they cannot make them *odious* on this account, without making the whole *Government* *odious* also. And how long the *Government* will bear with such *Usage*, neither they, nor I can tell.

But, notwithstanding what their *Lordships* most bitter *Adversaries* have laid to their Charge, I could never persuade my self, but that they had, in all the parts of their Lives, shewn themselves *true* to the *Interest* of this *Nation*, and this *Church*. And therefore cannot be induced to think them the *Betrayers* of either; or to treat their *Names* with such *Contempt*, and such *Reproaches*, as are too usually bestowed upon them. But I am sensible, that, tho' there hath been nothing in their *Lordships* former Behaviour, destructive of the true *Interest* either of *Church* or *State*: yet their *Conduct*, on this particular occasion, may possibly be found to be so; and consequently, *they* may deserve, on this one *Account*, to be treated as *Enemies* to *both*. I have therefore,

III. Consider'd, with all the exactness I could, whether this *Bill*, which their *Lordships* have opposed, would probably prove an advantage, either to the *State*, or the *Church*; or a disadvantage. As to the *State*, I think the Case is plain. And it is not so much as pretended, that such a *Bill* can possibly contribute to the greater *Security* of the *Succession* in the *Protestant Line*: which is our present *Establishment*. The Effects, and Consequences of it, must inevitably be, the *disuniting* our *Hearts* and *Affections* more and more from one another; and the *keeping out* of *Officers*, *Persons* that are entirely well affected to
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the present Settlement : which two things may very much endanger the State ; but cannot possibly be for the Advantage of it. If, therefore, we be sincere, and in earnest for the *Protestant Succession*, the defeating of which is one great aim of our Adversaries ; how can we be fond of any thing that will be so far from assisting us in the opposing them, that it will help forward their Work ? I do not wonder so much to find those who are professedly in another Interest, so zealous for this *Bill*, and so enraged against those who have oppos'd it : But to find Persons, who profess that our whole Concern, at present, is to keep out a *Popish Prince*, and to secure the *Protestant Succession*, eagerly promoting what hath not the least tendency to *that*, but rather an apparent tendency to the contrary, is indeed surprising, and unaccountable. And the more so, because many of these *Persons* seem very apprehensive, not only of the Danger from our Foreign Enemy, but from the Designs of not a few amongst our selves. We are told, indeed, That there are enough Persons to supply all Offices, without the assistance of the *Occasional Conformists* ; and as fully fixed in the Interest of the *Protestant Settlement* as They : and I am willing to hope there may. But I think this is far from being so certain, as to induce us to venture our *whole* upon this Supposition : and we are not in so good a Condition, as that we can prudently discourage and irritate *any* who are undoubtedly in that Interest. Especially, when we are told by one (who sometimes, unawares, lets us into the

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Secrets of his *Party*) that there are *Occasional Swearers*, as well as *Occasional Conformists* ; who take Oaths with no other Design but to break them, at a convenient Season : And when we have great reason to suspect it, tho' he had not been so kind as to give us notice of it.

But, though it be so apparent that this *Act* could not be for the Interest of the *State*; if by the *State* we mean the *present Establishment*, as without doubt we do: yet perhaps it may be found, that it is so much for the *Interest* of the *Church*, and so necessary to its Preservation, and Security, that it is to be compassed at all Adventures, even at the prejudice of the *Protestant Settlement*. I express myself thus, because I would have you observe, that nothing can prove the usefulness and expediency of it, unless it can be shewn, that the necessity of it to the *Church's* preservation is so great, and the Advantages of it to the *Church* so very considerable, as to countervail the evil Consequences it may have amongst our selves, and with respect to the *present Establishment*. For since it cannot, as I see, promote the least good end in our *State*, but appears rather to have an ill Aspect upon that; it is not sufficient to allege, that it will be for the Interest of the *Church*: unless the *Advantage* on this Side, do plainly out-weigh the *Disadvantages* on the other. For no one can think it Wise, on any other Supposition, to attempt any thing in a Nation, new, and attended with Inconveniences.

Let us now, if you please, consider the Advantages accruing to the *Established Church* from this *Act*. I have before observed, that it is impossible, that should be for the Interest of the *Church*, which is any ways prejudicial to the Interest of the *Protestant Establishment*; and that it is absurd to talk of serving the *Church* by diserving the *State*; or by doing that which in the end may be a great prejudice to it, and endanger its safety. But now farther, If we would judge of the great *Necessity* and *Advantages* of this *Act* to the *Church*: I think we cannot do it better than by observing, what ill Effects, and Disadvantages, have come to the *Church*, from the practice of *Occasional Conformity*, for these many Years

Years past. For since the Design of this *Bill* is to discourage a *Practice*, which hath been notorious for these many Years ; we cannot better determine concerning the *Necessity* and *Advantages* of this *Bill*, than by reflecting upon the known Consequences of this *Practice*. If the *Church of England* have been brought into any real Danger by it ; then something may be said to shew a *Necessity* for such a *Bill*. But, if not ; then we can plead no *Necessity* for it, nor any *Advantages* from it, that we know of, to the *Church* : at least, no such *Advantages* as are able to countervail the *Disadvantages* of it.

Now I believe it will be granted, that the *Church* not only *subsisted*, but *flourished*, under K. Charles II. throughout whose whole Reign the *Occasional Conformists* either communicated *occasionally* when any *separate Assemblies* were tolerated ; or more *constantly* when they were not : and, I suppose, did not refuse *Offices*, as they came in their way. In King James II. his Reign, the *Church* was indeed in *Danger*, not from the practice of *Occasional Conformity* ; but from *Popery*, and the practice of *rigid Separation* : Not from the principles of the *Occasional Conformists*, (of whom I shall say more by and by,) who could never join with the *Papists* in ruining what they acknowledge *lawful* to be complied with, and in many things *excellent* ; but from the *Principles* of those who think the *Church* *unlawful* and *Antichristian*, and no better than one branch of *Popery*. But by the especial Providence of God, it Triumphed over all its Enemies. In the *last Reign* (which raised the Indignation of so many against *Occasional Conformity*) the *Church* kept its Ground, notwithstanding the *Act of Toleration*, and notwithstanding the *Practice* of *Occasional Conformity*. This is confessed by the greatest Enemies to the *Practice* : And it is acknowledged by all, That the *Church* is in no *Danger*, after so many Years experience. If then the *Church* have been so secure

for many Years in the midst of this *Practice*; from whence can we collect so much Danger as some apprehend? And on what grounds is it, that we prognosticate its Ruine? And if its *Danger* so little appear in so long a time, that none can discern it; whence arises the necessity for such a *Bill*? Or, what are the great Advantages to be gained to the *Church* by it? And if the most quick-sighted Men see no Danger to the *Church* in a *Reign* which they think did not overmuch favour it; how much less ground for fear in a *Reign*, in which all the favour they themselves could desire, is sure to be shewn towards it? But the truth of the Matter is this. *Occasional Conformity* tends, in the nature of it, not to the Ruine of the *Church*, but to *Constant Conformity* with it: For it helps to abate Men's prejudices against those small Matters, the constant use of which is disliked; and to reconcile them still more and more to *Constant Communion*. And it hath been observed by those who have had opportunity to see it, that it hath had a good effect this way in many *Families*, as well as single Persons. Now methinks, if the *Practice* have this good tendency; and many an one be brought over entirely to the *Church* by it; some small Encouragement ought to be left for it, rather than any Discouragements proposed: And we should rather invite Men to come as far as they can towards us, than affright them from us; since *they*, or *others*, may be induced by it to come farther than at first they thought of; and in the mean while the *Church* appears to be in no Danger.

All that I can think of to be alleged against what I am offering, is, That though the *Church* be not now in Danger; yet by this *Practice* many will be in *Offices*, who may, one time or other, Ruine the *Church* of *England*. How far the *Principles* of the Persons concerned will oblige them to this, I shall

enquire presently. At present I observe, that the natural Tendency of this *Practice* being of present Advantage to the *Church*, as it reconciles many to it; it is very improbable that more *Mischief* can ever be done to the *Church* by it, than *Benefit*. And we are not (as I have observed already) to provide against Evils which *may* happen in the Days of our Posterity; unless we can do it without disturbing and injuring our selves: and unless the *nature* of the thing, or *experience*, plainly convince us, that they will *probably* come to pass. And neither of these, I think, plainly warn us of this *Evil*. For the *nature* of the thing tends as much, at least, to reconcile Men to the *Church* of *England*, as it can ever be supposed to do to the Ruine of it: And we have had the *experience* of as many Years as are sufficient to teach us, whether the *Church* have any grounds for fear of Ruine from this *Practice*, or not.

If it be here said, that this *Act* would bring many *Occasional Conformists* over to the *Church*; I answer, Perhaps it may. But can it be supposed in a moment to alter their Principles; and make those, who are now represented as bent upon the Ruine of the *Church*, entire Lovers and Friends to it? If not, then we may say (according to the arguing of the same Persons who would allege this) they had better not be taken into its Bosom. Whereas those who are reconciled more easily, by the *Practice* of *Occasional Conformity*, have their Judgments convinced; and their Aversion entirely removed, before they alter their *Practice* to *constant* and *total Conformity*. On the other side, if this *Act* bring not these Persons over to the *Church*, who are said to intend its Ruine, it certainly incenses them the more; makes them more compact, and designing; forms them into close Cabals and Combinations; and renders them more formidable to the *Church* than they were before. So that, upon

the whole, I could never be able to see the great necessity for such an *Act*, nor the great *advantages* of it, with respect either to the *State*, or the *Church*. As to the *State*; the design of it is to keep *some* out of *Offices*, who are entirely in that Interest which is declared to be the only *Interest* of the *State*: and, as to the *Church*, the design of it is to put an end to a *Practice*, which hath never yet done the *Church* any Mischief, but helped to reconcile many Persons to it. And upon these accounts, I cannot persuade my self to inveigh against my Lords the *Bishops*, who think it not prudent, to divide us yet more from one another, and encrease our mutual Animosities, by an *Act* which is acknowledged to be, *at this time*, at least, unnecessary; and which can pretend to no *advantages* proportionable to the *disadvantages* of it. We know the *Inconveniences* of *Occasional Conformity*, by the experience of many Years: but we know not all the *Inconveniences* that may attend the passing such a *Bill* against it.

IV. In order to make a right Judgment in this Case, I considered, and examin'd, as carefully as possible, the *Characters* and *Principles* of the *Persons*, against whom this *Act* was designed: Who, I think, are as generally mistaken as any *Party* amongst us. And these are the *Occasional Conformists*, who may be divided into *two sorts*: Such as prefer the Worship of the *Church of England* for a constancy, but hold the *separate Congregations* to be *lawful Churches*, and think themselves obliged in Conscience, sometimes to *communicate* with them; and such as prefer the Worship of the *Dissenters* for a constancy, but hold the Worship of the *Church of England* to be Christian and lawful, and think themselves obliged, to testify their Charity by communicating sometimes with it. These are the *professed Principles* of these Men: and we are not to judge their Hearts and inward Designs, lest we teach them an ill Lesson against

gainst our selves. The former of these cannot be supposed to meditate the Ruine of the Church of England; unless we will suppose them to be Hypocrites without any ground. The latter are generally such, as some few Amendments and Abatements in things truly indifferent, would bring over entirely to the Church. They are such, as are not, in their Principles, Enemies to Monarchy: And have given proof enough, that they are not always ready to run in with popular Clamours against their Monarch; and that they are fixed in their Love and Zeal for the present Establishment. And, notwithstanding what is laid to their Charge, They are such, or they are the followers of such, as resisted the violent Proceedings in the troublesome Times; as abhorred the horrid Murther of King Charles the first; as helped forward the Restauration of King Charles the Second, as much as any Men could do, in their Rank and Station. As for a Liturgy, they have always declared themselves ready to conform to one: And for Episcopacy, they think it lawful; and would not scruple to conform to that, could they entirely conform in other points. And they who think otherwise of them, seem to confound them with the rigid Separatists, by whom they have been always hated as Persons too favourable to our Church, and too near to Conformity; and to whom such an Act as this would be most grateful, as it would be a discouragement to what, they are sensible, is an injury to the Cause of Separation. I acknowledge, indeed, that it is a wonderful and unaccountable Thing, on the one hand, for Men who acknowledge the Established Church very well constituted, to give any encouragement to Separation from it, by their presence at the Dissenting Congregations: And on the other hand, for Men, who acknowledge it a lawful and Christian Church, with all means of Edification in it, to separate from it; when

when the Advantages of our *Union* and *Concord* are so apparent, and so valuable. But I cannot help it, if some *Christians* have their heads so turned, as to think it their Duty to communicate with all Parties; and others have work'd themselves into a persuasion, that *Constant Communion* with such a *Church* is made unlawful by some *Circumstances*. I pray God to direct them to the *Truth*. But whilst they are in this Error, I cannot think that they deserve the Name of the *Worst of the Dissenters*: unless they be the *worst Dissenters* who are nearest to the *Church*, and most ready to come over entirely to it. And perhaps it is this that many Men are afraid of. But is not the least *Error* to be born with in Brethren? And are they, who are disposed to an Accommodation, and nearest to *Conformity*, to be treated as *worse* than those who are obliged by their Principles to hate our Worship, and to deal with it as *Antichristian* and *intolerable*? I speak now of the *honest* Men amongst them: as for the *dishonest*, nothing can hold them. *Occasional Conformity*, and *Constant*, are equal to them: and they will practice *either*, as best may serve their Purposes and Projects. But these are the avowed Principles of the *best* part of them. And certainly, at a time when our *Union* would be of so great advantage to our common Cause, our Business should be to endeavour to persuade and argue them into *Constant Communion*; not to exasperate them, and set them farther from us.

The Charge of *Hypocrisy* and *Scandal to Religion*, fixed upon the *Practice* of these Persons, never moved me: because I could never think it *Hypocrisy* or *Scandalous to Religion*, for Men to do what they always held to be lawful, and what they do upon other occasions also, for the sake of an *Office*. Indeed, for any Persons, who live in a constant neglect of Religious Duties, and are hardly ever
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known to frequent any Religious Assemblies, whether *Conformists* or *Nonconformists*, to come to Church merely to qualifie themselves for an Office, carries along with it a great Suspicion of *Hypocrisie*. But this belongs not peculiarly to the *Occasional Conformists*: nor can it be fixed upon the *honest* part of them, whose Principle it is, that Communion with the Church is in it self lawful; and that they ought sometimes to communicate with it on other occasions, as well as for the sake of an Office. Thus much for the *Characters* and *Principles* of the *Persons* against whom this *Act* was designed, whom I would always have *Church-Men* carefully to distinguish from other *Dissenters*; and to lay no greater Burthen upon them than they deserve: and then they will not be Taxed either as *Friends to Enthusiasm*, or *unfit to serve their Prince and Country in the present Establishment of the Monarchy*; or *eagerly bent upon ruining the Church of England*. Nay, if we should be a little kinder to them than they deserve; it would be no more than what the Christian Religion will bear us out in: and it may redound at last to our own Security and Advantage, as well as to the Honour of our Church. And having examined into the *Principles* of these *Occasional Conformists*, I could not think them such formidable Enemies to the *State* or *Church*, as they are represented to be; or that more *Advantages* could accrue to our present Constitution from such an *Act* against *them*, than *Disadvantages*: And therefore could not blame the Conduct of those *Bishops* who opposed and prevented it.

V. Having observed, upon this occasion, with what applause *one* part of my *Lords* the *Bishops* hath been honoured, and with what Disrespect the *other* hath been too commonly treated; I considered, as exactly as I could, in what they agreed, and in what they differed; that I might see whether there
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was any good ground for this very different *Treatment* they have met with. They all agree, that the *Occasional Conformists* can never defend their *Separation*; and are extremely to blame in refusing constantly to *Communicate* with a *Church*, whose *Communion* they acknowledge in it self lawful. They all agree, that all lawful *Methods* are to be taken for the preservation of this *Church* from Ruine. They all agree, that the *Church* is in no *Danger* at present from a long *Practice* of *Occasional Conformity*. They all must agree, that the *Church* is in danger from *Poper*y, as the *State* is threatned by *Popish Adversaries*, and others, both in our own, and a Neighbour Nation; who either profess themselves in the Interest of a *Popish Prince*, or give us too much ground to suspect they are so. They all must agree, that the *Occasional Conformists* are firm Friends to the *Protestant Establishment*; which is declared to be the only Interest of *England*. They all must agree, that some *Times* are very improper for such a *Bill*. The difference between them seems to be this. The one part thinks, that this *Practice* may prove prejudicial to the *Church*: the other thinks, it will rather prove prejudicial to the *Separation*. The one thinks, that future Evils are to be prevented: the other thinks, that this is not a Time to take care of Posterity, so much as of our selves; and that there is no reason to fear these imagined future Evils. The one thinks this a proper time to fence against the Enemies of the *Church*: the other thinks, that the practice of *Occasional Conformity* tends not to the Ruine of the *Church*; and that this is not a time to depress, or discourage any, who are in the Interest of the *State*; and that the readiest way to Ruine the *Church* in the end, is to weaken the *State*. The one thinks, That her Majesty's auspicious *Reign* cannot better begin than with such an ACT: The other thinks, that nothing could be more im-

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proper at the beginning of her Reign, than to create fresh Uneasinesses, and Animosities amongst her Subjects. It is usually thought, that Reigns are then begun with the greatest Glory, when they are opened with *Acts of Indemnity and Favour* to all; and that it is not adviseable, to begin with what must dissatisfy, and allarm, any number of Subjects, without a very urgent and present Necessity. No one seems more sensible of the Pleasure Princes enjoy in the Happiness and Union of all their Subjects, or of the Evil Consequences of their Uneasiness and Dissensions, than her *Excellent Majesty*; who concludes her last *most gracious Speech*, after this most affecting manner. *I want Words to express to you my earnest Desires of seeing all my Subjects in perfect Peace, and Union amongst themselves. I have nothing so much at Heart, as their general Welfare and Happiness. Let me therefore desire you all, that you would carefully avoid any Heats or Divisions, that may disappoint me of that Satisfaction, and give encouragement to the Common Enemies of the Church and State. And which tends most to the Disappointing her Majesty of that Satisfaction, and the encouraging the Common Enemy; the promoting, or opposing such Bills; let any one judge.*

If you please to consider these *Differences* between their *Lordships*, as the Grounds, which we may suppose, for their different Behaviour: you will be the better able to determine, with what Justice the One part is applauded, for their Zeal and Readiness to serve the Interest of the Church; whilst the Other is treated, as the *Betrayers* of it, and the greatest *Enemies* to its Constitution. I pray God put a stop to the Malice of *some*; and open the Eyes of *others*, that they may see the Things that belong to our Peace, and make for our true Interest. Were *they* who are most incensed against the Conduct of those who opposed the *Bill*, per-

persuaded, upon good Reasons, that their *Lordships* were very much out ; (tho' very few trouble themselves about any Reasons :) yet, if they were more acted by the Spirit of Christianity, than the Spirit of *Censure* and *Reviling*, they would not rail, but pity their *Lordships* Blindness ; and wonder that they can be so abused, as not to see the *Security* of our Estate ; the unmoveable Zeal of all Ranks amongst us for the *Protestant Succession* ; the little need there is of the Good-will and Assistance of our Protestant Brethren ; and the apparent danger the Church is in, from their *Occasional Conformity*. Let those, who profess themselves in a *Popish Interest*, betray the bitterness of their Souls, by railing against the *Bishops*, who opposed their beloved *Bill* ; and let them carry forward their Designs, by making their *Lordships* Odious, and ranking them in *Associations* with *Dissenters* for the ruine of Church and State. But let not those, who profess another Interest, and a *Protestant Establishment*, help forward the work of its Enemies, and shew their Zeal for the Church by inveighing against those, who have demonstrated their love to it as much as any Men ; and are against this *Bill*, for fear it should tend to the prejudice of the *Protestant Establishment*, and, at the end, to the Ruine of this Church.

By all that I have said, put together, you may see the Reasons which have prevailed with me to pass a Judgment in this Cause so different from yours, and that of your Neighbours. And according as they seem Convincing, or not Convincing, I expect you should either yield to them, or Answer them : For this is what I propose to my self in this Trouble I have given you, either to add some Light to you ; or to receive some from you.

If you should still think me mistaken; believe it to be only for want of better information: to which, I can assure you, I am ready to yield, as soon as it appears.

I am,

Your very Affectionate, &c.

POSTSCRIPT.

I Heartily wish, that we had any ground to Hope, that either the *Occasional Conformists*, on the one hand, would now disappoint the Hopes of their Enemies; and entirely come over to the *Church*, whose Worship they acknowledge to be *lawful*: or, if they still stand out, that those who have it in their Power, would condescend to their Weakness; and agree to such *Alterations* as would not prejudice the *Church*, but would forcibly bring over them to it. And by this means, the whole foundation for such a *BILL*, and the inconveniences attending it, are removed. And surely, if the *former* be, at this time, guided by their professed Principles; they must acknowledge, that the preservation of the *present Establishment*, and the Interest of the whole *Protestant Cause*, ought to have as much weight to determine them to *constant Conformity*, as any Circumstance they can possibly invent, can have, to determine them against it. As for the *latter*; I would leave with them the Words of a very great Man, who was never thought to be an Enemy to the *Church of England*, The *Sermon*, out of which I shall transcribe them, was preached before an Honourable Audience, and at a very remarkable Season. Nov. 4. 1688. The Words are these.

64 *A Letter to a Clergy-Man concerning, &c.*

these. When it is so apparent, That the Weakness of some, and the ill Designs of others, require some compliance and condescension, we have reason to hope, that the Church of England, which, at the beginning of the Reformation, took such prudent care, as not to offend the Papists, by going farther from them than was necessary; will, when ever it is likely to do good, condescend a great deal farther than it is necessary to Reform, to meet the Dissenter. For while the external Decency, Gravity, and Solemnity of Worship is secured, no Wise and Good Man will think much to change a changeable Ceremony, when it will heal the Breaches and Divisions of the Church: And let us all heartily pray to God, that there may be this good and peaceable Disposition of Mind in all Conformists and Nonconformists, towards a happy Re-union. And all considering Men will think it time to lay aside such little Disputes, when it is not merely the Church of England, nor any particular Sect of Protestants, whose Ruin is aimed at: But the whole
PROTESTANT FAITH.

F I N I S.

TWO SERMONS

UPON

St. MATTHEW 10. 34.

Concerning the

Divisions, and Cruelties,

Of which the

CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Hath been made the *Occasion.*



Preached in the Year, 1703.

III

TWO SERMONS

UPON

St MATTHEW 10: 34

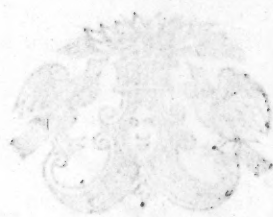
Concerning the

Disciples and Church

Of which the

CHRISTIAN RELIGION

Has been made the Question.



Printed in the Year 1703.

S E R M O N I.

St. MATTHEW 10. 34.

*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth :
I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

Or, as it is in St. LUKE, Chap. 12. 51.

*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ?
I tell you, Nay, but rather Division.*

THE full meaning of these Words, (spoken by our Lord to his Apostles, when He was giving them Commission to preach his Religion to the World,) we shall find to be this ; if we consider the foregoing, and following Verses, “ You may imagine perhaps that the Excellence of my Religion, and the Evidence that accompanies it, will effectually recommend it to the Understanding, and the Affections of Mankind ; that the Humility, and Meekness, which it commands, will influence the World ; and that such an Institution as this will breath Peace, and an universal Calmness, into the Minds of Men. But it will not be so. How excellent soever it is in it self ; how much Evidence soever accompanies it ; it will not be received as you would expect : nor will it effectually contribute to the Peace and Quiet of the World ;

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“ though

“ though it tends very much in its own Nature to
 “ do so. Nay, This very Religion which I come
 “ into the World to plant and propagate, (I foresee,
 “ and forewarn you of it,) will be made the Occa-
 “ sion, and prove the Cause, of much Division and
 “ Strife ; of the strongest Passions, Hatreds, and
 “ Animosities ; nay, of the utmost pitch of Ma-
 “ lice and Persecution ; and of the greatest Barba-
 “ rities, and Cruelties : and this, amongst Men of
 “ the same Nation, of the same Blood, of the same
 “ Family ; amongst Men who have the Ties of
 “ Nature, Friendship, Alliance, Interest, to make
 “ them good, kind, and beneficent, to one another.
 “ *Think not that I am come to send peace on earth,* that
 “ is, Think not that the consequence of my com-
 “ ing into the World, and preaching a new Reli-
 “ gion in it, will be this, that Men will sincerely
 “ embrace it ; or that it will tame the Passions of
 “ those who shall pretend to embrace it ; or that
 “ the World will follow the Precepts of Humanity
 “ and good Nature laid down in it. No, *I came*
 “ *not to send peace but a sword,* that is, The conse-
 “ quence of my coming into the World, and pro-
 “ mulgating this Religion, will not be *Peace on*
 “ *earth, and good-will amongst men :* but this very Re-
 “ ligion, this holy and peaceable Institution, will
 “ (through the Perverseness of Mankind) be often
 “ made a Cover and Pretense for the greatest Bar-
 “ barities ; and often prove the Occasion of Disor-
 “ der, and Passion, and Malice, and Violence, and
 “ of all the Evils you can imagine.

We must observe, that our *Lord*, in the *Text*, doth
 not speak of his Design in coming into the World :
 for it is very plain that He came with design to
 send Peace and good Nature upon Earth ; and to
 plant the noblest and most extensive Charity in the
 Hearts of Men. But He speaks of a most unhappy
 Circumstance of his appearing, and instituting his
 Reli-

Religion; that it should be turned, by the Malice of the Devil, and the Wickedness of the Heart of Man, to very bad Purposes, and ill Uses; to the disturbance of that World, which it was design'd to compose and make happy. And because much of this hath been seen in all Ages, and all Nations, in which the Sound of the *Gospel* hath been heard; and a great deal of it is still to be seen in our own Age and Nation; and because many have been offended at Christ, and his Doctrine on this unhappy Account, and have blamed Christianity for the sake of this, which it hath unwillingly been the Occasion of: therefore, it may be proper and useful to make some Observations upon this Subject. And what I design upon it, is,

I. To observe the Truth of what was here predicted by our Lord: that *Christianity* hath been made the Occasion of much Disturbance; and of many fatal Divisions, Hatreds, and Persecutions, in the World.

II. To vindicate Christianity from the Guilt and Blame of this Unhappiness.

III. To consider whence it hath proceeded.

IV. To make some proper Observations, and draw some useful Inferences, from what I shall have said upon this Subject.

I. I shall observe the Truth of what is here predicted by our Lord: that the *Christian Religion* hath been made the Occasion of much Disturbance; of many sad Divisions, Hatreds, and Persecutions in the World.

It is indeed, a very moving and uneasy Consideration, that, from the time of its first appearance to this very Day, such an use hath been made of it, or of something or other supposed to belong to it, as hath tempted some to think that the Mischief it

hath given Rise to, in the World, is not counter-vailed by all the Good it hath ever hitherto brought forth. And there needs but a very little Knowledge in the History of former Times, or the Transactions of these later Ages, to make one wish that there were much less reason to think so, than there appears to be.

What our *Saviour* chiefly had an Eye to, in the *Text*, was, probably that Persecution; and those instances of Malice; which He saw it would occasion in the World, at its first appearance: that Hatred of *Christians* it would produce in the Breasts of *Unbelievers*; and those Storms of Persecution, which the Profession of it would raise against them. But, as He could not likewise be ignorant of those Hatreds and Animosities it would, in after Ages, raise amongst *Christians* themselves, against one another; to the disturbing, and ruining their common Peace and Quiet: so, He did not (we may be sure) exclude these; but had an Eye to them all, in the Words of the *Text*.

When Christianity first appeared, and first was preached; the Prejudices and Passions of Men ran high against it: as it was a Contradiction to their received ways of Worship; to their former and settled Principles; to the Dictates and Practices of their Forefathers; and to their own indulged Lusts, and evil Habits. And so the very Profession of it, much more the bold Preaching of it, alarmed all Mankind against the Men who professed and preached it. They were hated by their nearest Relations; they were exposed to the greatest Evils in Life; and they were persecuted even to Death: All Countries were disturbed at them; and all Princes, and Magistrates made it their Business to extirpate them. This was their Case almost constantly, till their Numbers increased; till Christianity became the Established Religion of whole Na-
tions;

tions ; and Princes became the Temporal Patrons of the Church. And thus did this Religion which *Jesus* came to plant in the World, give an allarm to the Kingdoms of it : and was made the Handle to unspeakable Disquiet and Disturbance, Malice, and Persecution, in it.

But when it came to be the settled Religion ; to have the Approbation, and Countenance of Princes ; and to enjoy the favourable Look of the great Men of this World : what a glorious Scene would any one expect, who seriously looks into the Design, Nature, and Precepts, of it ? What a Scene of Calmness and Serenity of Mind ; of Mortification, and Conquest of those Passions and Lusts, from whence proceeds all the Mischief in the World ? What a Scene of Love and Beneficence to one another ; of Joy and Delight in one another's Happiness ; of Openness and Freedom ; of Sincerity and Kindness ; of Humility, Condescension, Humanity, and Meekness ? What could one expect that searcheth into the Gospel, more than the Humours and Actions of Mankind, but that Peace and Holiness should have kissed each other ; that Contentment and Happiness should have flourished in the Earth ; that all that could contribute to the Quiet and Satisfaction of the World, should from this Time have abounded in it ?

Would you think, that as soon as the Christians had Rest from the World about them, their Passions ran as high against one another, as the Passions of the unbelieving World had done against *them* before ? Would you imagine that they turn'd from suffering gloriously, to biting and devouring ; to hating and condemning one another ? That their strongest and most avowed Hatreds ; their most fatal Divisions and Animosities ; took their Rise from, and had their Foundation in, some Point of Religion, some Point of Faith, or Worship ? And

that they were often more concerned for some insignificant Matter, or some Point of Speculation, that the Gospel had not so absolutely determined, as to leave no room for Diversity of Opinions: That they were too often, I say, more violent for, and against these, than to preserve the Obligation, and secure the Practice, of the weightier Matters of their Law? Yet thus it was: and thus it hath been ever since, to that Degree, that it is a Question whether more Unkindness and Inhumanity, more Malice and Hatred, more Violence and Barbarity, have been shewn by Heathens and Infidels towards Christians for the sake of their Religion; than have been shewn by Christians towards one another, on the score of some Religious Differences.

The contending with the Sword of the Spirit, the Word of Truth, and Meekness, for the Purity of Faith and Worship once delivered to the Saints, was truly commendable and praiseworthy. This sort of *Contention*, for the *Gospel*, in the Spirit of the *Gospel*, hath ever tended to the increasing of Charity, as well as to the manifesting of Truth. But a *false Zeal* quickly devoured it, and took its place: and very soon prompted Men of ill Tempers, and worldly Designs, to make a greater Distinction amongst *Christians*, than need; to stigmatize holier Men than themselves with hard Names, and odious Appellations; and then, to treat them contumeliously, and as Persons unfit to be dealt with in the Ways of Humanity, and Candour. And, on the other side, this same Pretense gave occasion to Men of Parts and Passion, when they saw themselves likely to be oppressed, to strengthen themselves in their Opinions; to form Parties upon a Foundation distinct from that of the flourishing Party; to enter into close Designs and Combinations; and so to help forward the Disturbance, and Disquiet of the Christian Church.

If we pass from these first Ages downwards; who can speak, or hear, of such things, as have been publickly transacted amongst Christians, on Religious Accounts, without a very sensible Commotion within? We may read it in Histories, and we may see it with our Eyes, that there is an immortal Hatred; an Uneasiness not ever likely to cease, between *Christians* of several Denominations. There are *Inquisitions* and Torments design'd, and made use of, by Christians against Christians, beyond the Example of former Ages; and beyond the Cruelty of either Jewish or Heathen Persecutors. We have known Men tortured and persecuted; murder'd and massacred; banished from their Possessions; deprived of their Estates; expelled their native Land; separated from their Children and Friends, or their Friends and Children torn by Violence from them; for the sake of Religion, and under pretense of doing Service to the Church of God, by extending and propagating the Faith and Worship of a particular Set of Men. And how exactly hath the Account of this Matter given by our Saviour been verified, in several Countries, in these last Ages, as well as the first Times of the Gospel? *A man hath been at variance against his father; and the daughter against her mother; and the daughter in law against her mother in law; and a man's foes have been those of his own household,* as it follows just after the Text in St. Matth. 35, 36. And as it is in St. Luke, ch. 12. 52, 53. *There have been five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. The father divided against the son, and the son against the father; the mother against the daughter, and the daughter against the mother; the mother in law against the daughter in law, and the daughter in law against her mother in law.*

We of this Nation, indeed, read, and hear at a distance, of greater Barbarities and Cruelties, than
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we have our selves experienc'd, or seen with our Eyes : but yet we, amongst others, may help to prove the Truth of what I am now observing. For, What Heats, and Passions ; what Unkindnesses, and Incivilities ; what Hatreds and Variances ; what Parties and Distinctions ; nay, what Projects and Designs are there often seen amongst us, which, (if the Bottom of things be searched into,) owe their Original, or their Prosecution, to some real, or pretended, Difference in Religious Opinions, or Modes of Worship ? Names are invented to distinguish some from others, and make them odious and suspected ; and these Names are commonly taken from something that bears a relation to Religion, and the Worship of God : and the Church is too often hooked into Designs, in which it hath little to do ; and Sacred Words are made to serve the Purposes of projecting Men. For this is laid down as certain, that tho' True Religion be little regarded, but rather trampled on, by the Generality of the World ; yet the Pretences taken from thence are moving, and never fail to alarm the Multitude, and to forward a Design. Any Doctrine, manifestly framed to serve a Purpose, can at any time easily be made the distinguishing Mark of a true Christian, or the true Church : and all that will not yield to the Truth of it, shall presently be branded with some Religious Nick-name or other. *Heretick, Schismatick, Latitudinarian, Fanatick*, and the like, are all Names taken from some Difference in the holding and professing the same Religion. And they have been used so freely, and after such a manner, as that they have often effectually contributed to the Destruction of Christian Charity ; to the Overthrow of Peace and Concord ; to the Ruine of many excellent Designs ; and to the promoting many bad ones.

It is a shame to speak of these things : but it is too plain to be dissembled, that it hath fared thus with Christianity, ever since it appeared ; that it hath not only been made the Occasion of the bitterest Persecutions from the Infidel part of the World ; but also of the bitterest Hatreds, and strongest Malice, and most irreconcilable Divisions, amongst Christians themselves : And these, at length, rooted in the Hearts of Men, to that Depth, and with that Firmness, that it appears next to impossible to extirpate them ; or to restore the World to the Spirit of Meekness, and Quiet, and to the Temper of reasonable Creatures. *Next to impossible*, I say : For what can we think, when all the Attempts Almighty God sees fit to make towards it, have proved ineffectual ; (and we may be sure He chuses the best Means, and makes use of all that it is Wisdom to use ;) when even his last Dispensation by the hands of his Son, sent from Heaven, hath been so far from healing the Wounds and Breaches in the Love and Regards of Men to one another, that it hath been abused to the inflaming and widening them ? When God himself *speaks to them of peace*, and yet *they make themselves ready to battel* ? When they have taken occasion from this last Tryal of his, designed to plant Peace and Unity in the Earth, to be the more quarrelsome, and the more incensed against one another ? When they search into the Bowels of this very Revelation, and fetch Fuel out of this most peaceable Institution, to set themselves, and the World about them in Flames : What small Hope, I say, can we have of the Restitution and Re-establishment of Quiet and Harmony in the Minds and Actions of Men ; whilst they are ever finding something in Religion it self, to exasperate their Minds against one another ; to make their Lives unquiet, and Society unharmonious ?

The Prophets have invain described the Golden Age of their *Messiah*, and invain extolled his glorious and pacifick Reign ; unless God himself interpose. *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb* (saith the Prophet *Isaiab*, ch. *II.* 6, 7, 8, 9.) *and the leopard shall lie down with the kid : and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them. And the cow and the bear shall feed, their young ones shall lie down together : and the lion shall eat straw like the Ox. And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the aspe, and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice den. They shall not hurt, nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.*

If this be a Description which relates to the Reign of Christ, and to the Glories of his Kingdom, when it should be set up in this World ; we must with grief Remark, that either the Prophet speaks only with respect to the Nature and Tendency of Christ's Doctrine ; that, if Men would heartily receive and practice it, a glorious Peace and Happiness would be diffused over the Earth : or else, that He prophesies of some happy Times, unknown yet, which future Ages are to be blessed with. For *the earth is, indeed, full of the knowledge of the Lord*, in this Sense, that the Profession of Christianity is very widely spread. There is opportunity enough for Knowledge : but there hath been yet but little of this universal *Charity* seen, or felt, in the World. *The Earth is full of the knowledge of the Lord : and yet the wolf dwelleth not with the lamb ; nor doth the leopard lie down with the kid ; nor doth the cow and the bear feed together ; nor doth the sucking child play upon the hole of the aspe ; nor doth the weaned child put his hand upon the cockatrice den ; nor have these rapacious and terrible Creatures left off to hurt or destroy in God's holy mountain.* Nor hath any thing of what was intended by this, come to pass ; that is,

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Mens Tempers have not been universally tamed and subdued ; but the wild and wicked are still wild and wicked, still bite and devour the innocent ; and still a War is carried on amongst Men.

Nay, for what appears, and for all those Advantages that have been hitherto made towards a firm Union, and a sincere and universal Friendship amongst all Men ; every one of these figurative Expressions of the *Prophet*, may be literally fulfilled, before an universal Calmness reign thro' the Earth. And the *Wolf*, and the *Lion*, and the *Leopard*, and the *Bear*, may sooner enter into Terms of Reconciliation and Amity, with the milder Beasts, and with Mankind ; than the passionate and wild, the hurtful and venomous, the cruel and malicious, part of Mankind shall suffer themselves to be tamed and subdued into good Nature and Charity ; or be bound up by any Rules of Quiet and Harmony. But tho' we see so little sign of this hitherto ; yet we know that not a tittle of all that is spoken shall fail.

In the mean while, that it may be no Objection against Christianity it self, and no matter of Scandal and Offense to us, that it hath proved the Occasion of so sharp Swords, and so much Division upon Earth ; it becomes us to enquire, as I proposed,

II. Whether the Gospel it self be not wholly free from all the Guilt of this great Unhappiness ; or whether it be possible, with the least Degree of Justice, to attribute this to the Doctrine, or Design, of Jesus Christ ; to the Nature or Tendency of any thing contained in Christianity. A very few Words will suffice upon this Head. For let any Person, of never so little Capacity, look into the Account of our Saviour's Life, his Actions and his Words, recorded in the *Gospels* ; or into the Sermons, and Epistles, and Behaviour of his Apostles ; and see if they find, throughought the whole, any the least Encouragement

ragement given, either by Example or Precept, to the least Degree of that Temper of Mind, or Manner of Deportment, which doth but border upon ill Nature, or cruel Usage of our Fellow-Creatures. Did not our Lord himself condescend to all the Offices of Love and Beneficence to all the World of Sinners about him? Do not all his Precepts, which respect humane Society, manifestly tend to the Peace and Quiet of it? And would they not effectually procure and establish it, were they thoroughly attended to, and universally practised? Doth not He command, upon pain of God's eternal Displeasure against those who neglect it, the Practice of all the peaceable and quiet Virtues; and forbid the harbouring the very Thoughts and Surmizes, that may possibly tend to break in upon the Happiness of the World about us? Meekness, Humility, Condescension, Forbearance, Forgiveness, Tenderness, and the like: are they not indispensably enjoined? And the Vices contrary to these, Haughtiness, Pride, Revenge, Unmercifulness, Malice, and Ill-will: are they not strictly forbidden; and their Punishment declared to be certain, and intolerable? They are forbidden, in all Cases, and at all Times: Nothing can ever justify them; nothing is supposed in the Gospel ever to excuse those who are guilty of them. Nay, Love, and Beneficence, and a Readiness to be reconciled to our greatest and most violent Enemies, are made the shining and distinguishing Characters of a true Christian. And could He, who came to institute such a Religion, full of such Precepts, and constantly recommending such sort of Virtues above all others, be supposed to come on any other Design, but to compose the jarring Tempers, and Actions of Men, into Concord and Harmony? And can any one charge such a Religion, that seems to be calculated in all its Parts, chiefly for the planting, maintaining, and increasing,

sing, Peace and Love in the World ; can any one, I say, charge this Religion with the Guilt of those Heats, and Dissensions, which it hath been by Accident made the Occasion of ? No, It must be plain, beyond Contradiction, to all who will look into it, that Christianity it self hath not the least Part in this Guilt : but that we must seek for the true Source, and Foundation of all this Unhappiness somewhere else. This is what I now design, viz.

III. To consider, whence this great Unhappiness hath truly proceeded ; and where the Guilt of it is justly to be fix'd. And

I. This Unhappiness manifestly proceeded, in the first Ages of the Gospel, from the Prejudices and Passions of the unbelieving World, both *Jews* and *Gentiles*. This I mention first, because the Disturbance and Disquiet that sprang from this Original was first in order of time, commencing immediately with the Gospel it self : and was what our Lord chiefly respected in the *Text* ; which was spoken to the Persons who were themselves to be the first Propagators of his Religion, and the first Witnesses to this fatal Consequence of it. A Scene of Violence and Fury immediately attended the opening of the Gospel to the World. The Preachers, and Propagators of it were persecuted, beyond what had been known in the World before ; and all the sincere Professors of it hated by their very Friends and Relations, and pursued by all the Evils of this World, and all that is terrible to Flesh and Blood. Indeed this Persecution, and these Dissensions, had not happened in the World, if *Christianity* had not been preached to the Nations of it. But shall not *God* do his part to the reforming and amending the World ; because there are some in it that will make this very Attempt of his an Occasion of their growing worse ? Shall not God recommend the-

the Practice of all the quiet, and peaceable Virtues, by the greatest Motives and strongest Arguments ; because some will make this an Opportunity of their increasing in Fierceness and Inhumanity ? Had the Christian Religion indeed given the unbelieving World any reason to be so incensed against it, and so inhospitable to its Professors, somewhat might be said in Vindication of their Practice ; and some Blame justly cast at the Door of Christianity. But they raised this terrible Scene of Persecutions against it, not because they had no reason to receive it ; but because they would not. And they would not receive it, because it was against their Interests, or their Lusts, or their Humours, to receive it. Not that it de vested any of the Magistrates of this World of their lawful Authority ; or dissolv'd the Obligation of Obedience in their Subjects. Not that it concerned it self with the Rights and Privileges of Kingdoms, and Civil Societies ; or brake in upon the Government, or Discipline, of Nations. Not that it tended in its Nature to render Society disagreeable ; to make Men ill-natured, or morose, or uncharitable, or unjust, or cruel, or hypocritical ; or recommended any thing to Mankind contrary to the Peace and Quiet of the World. Nothing of this could be laid to its charge by its greatest Adversaries. But the plain State of the Case was this. They hated and exploded it, because, if it had universally taken place, the Follies and Superstitions of their received Forms of Worship must have vanished ; and the whole Fabric of their Forefathers Religion been shaken, and ruined. Let a Form of Worship be never so tedious with pompous Ceremonies ; never so full of Fopperies, and ridiculous Circumstances ; never so unworthy of reasonable Creatures to offer, or of God to receive : yet there is I know not what Fondness for it, riveted in the Minds and Affections of Men, if de-

it descended down to them from their Forefathers, and can but plead Age and Prescription.

But perhaps Christianity, with the Evidence that at first accompanied it, might have got over this Difficulty; and have born down this blind and senseless Veneration of Antiquity. But this was not all it had to encounter. It opposed the Passions, and Lusts, and present worldly Interests, of Men. The Jews saw, it condemned and opposed that Course of Sensuality and Covetousness they were generally engaged in; and that it put an End to their Hopes of Temporal Prosperity, and Fleshly Pleasure, and Triumphs over their Enemies, under the Reign of their *Messiah*. The great Men of the World found it most opposite to the main Design of their Lives; and irreconcilable with that Ambition, and Pride, and insatiable Love of Riches and Grandeur, which they had entertained, and could not part with. A very small part of the World, as things went then, found any the least Comfort or Satisfaction in any of its Proposals. These were the Reasons why both Jews and Gentiles made it their Business to crush it in its Infancy; and to persecute, even to Death, the first Preachers and Professors of it: because they carried such Evidence along with them, in the Miracles they every where wrought, that they judg'd it must presently gain Ground, if not thus heartily, and inhumanely resisted. This is a plain Account how it came to pass, that the *Christian Religion* was at first the Occasion of much Disturbance, and of bitter Persecutions in the World: And whether this proceeded from any thing blameable in it self, or from the unreasonable Prejudices, and unpardonable Vices, of the Unbelieving World, may be left to any one of Common Sense to judge.

S E R M O N II.

St. MATTHEW 10. 34.

*Think not that I am come to send peace on earth :
I came not to send peace, but a sword.*

Or, as it is in St. LUKE, Chap. 12. 51.

*Suppose ye that I am come to give peace on earth ?
I tell you, Nay, but rather Division.*

HAVING from these Words, *first*, made some Observations upon the Matter of *Fact*, (here predicted by our Lord,) that Christianity hath been made the Occasion of many bitter Persecutions, fatal Divisions, and Hatreds, in the World : and having, in the *second* Place, vindicated Christianity it self from the Guilt and Blame of it ; I proposed, *Thirdly*, To consider whence this Unhappiness hath truly proceeded ; and where the Guilt of it is justly to be fix'd. The *first* Observation was, that the bitter Persecution, and Animosities, occasion'd at its first Appearance, proceeded entirely from the unreasonable Prejudices, and Lusts, and Passions, of the Unbelieving World.

Let us now turn our Thoughts from the Unbelieving to the Believing World ; from the Men that persecuted Christianity, to the Men that have embraced, and do profess it. And as we have before observed how much Hatred and Division, how many

ny Barbarities and Persecutions, amongst Christians themselves, have taken their Rise from Religion, and been founded on a Sacred Principle : so let us now consider whence this Unhappiness, amongst the Disciples of the same Master, hath proceeded, and from what Root it hath sprung.

2. *Secondly*, therefore, It is very plain that much of this Unhappiness hath proceeded from the Projects, and Designs ; the Ambition, or Pride, or Covetousness, of the wicked part of the Christian World. Christianity never pretended to reform those, that are resolv'd to be Wicked : and no wonder that such as these, (who have no Conscience, and no Principles of Religion,) when they have any of their own Contrivances to bring to effect, make use of the properest Means to accomplish them. They know that there is no better, nor more moving, Pretense, than the Care of Religion and the Church of God : and therefore this must be the Engine to set forward their Undertakings ; and their unhallowed Lips must profane holy Words, that these holy Words may sanctify their unhallowed Actions. Thus, for instance, if the Bounds of Power be to be enlarged beyond right and just ; if a Number of Men be to be extirpated, banished, or depressed ; something in Religion and the Church is often brought in, to colour over the vile Wickedness ; to shelter it from Scandal, and ripen it for Success. If a Prince's favourable Smile be to be obtained for one sort of Men, and his Displeasure to be kindled against another ; it is often seen that nothing will more effectually do this, than some Consideration taken from their difference in Opinion, or Practice, with relation to Religion, and the Worship of God.

This Method is frequently made use of by those who mean nothing more than the compassing their own Designs ; the enlarging their own Credit and

Interest; the ingratiating themselves with some whose Favour may turn to good account. And so the Peace of Humane Society; the Quiet of the World; and the Satisfaction and Contentment of their Neighbours, are sacrificed, at all Adventures, to their own private Coverousness, or Ambition, or Pride, or Revenge, or some wicked Humour or other: and because nothing better can be pretended, Religion must be drawn into the Quarrel; whilst these Men themselves, who are the forwardest to hide themselves under the Masque of something Holy, are of all others the most ready to reproach Religion it self on this very Account, and the first to object against it the many Disturbances, and Disquiets, it hath occasion'd in the World.

It is indeed, absurdly ridiculous, to hear Men of notorious Looseness, Men of profane and Atheistical Conversations, sollicitous about the Honour of God: and to see, how Men who have either never appeared at the Public Worship, or never appeared there with Decency, can, upon occasion, conceive a mighty Concern for the Credit and Beauty of it; how their Breasts can labour with the Heat of a pious Zeal; and all their Designs and Endeavours, on a sudden, be directed to the maintaining and supporting the Church of God. But this must be expected, we see plainly, whilst there are wicked and designing Men, under the Covert of the Christian Profession, in this World. For they that have selfish, and unchristian Designs; they that make no scruple of cherishing Ambition, or Pride, or Coverousness, or Revenge, will never make any scruple of using Religion, and the Church, as Instruments to promote the Designs such Tempers of Mind will put them upon. Add to this,

3. *Thirdly*, That much of the Unhappiness we are now speaking of, may have proceeded from the Passions, and Weaknesses, and Imprudences, of sincere Christians;

Christians; Christians that truly design well, and desire to promote the Honour of their Master, and their Religion. A good Christian will never indeed knowingly interpose in the promoting any Design, or advancing any Cause, to the destruction of the Peace, and Quiet, of the Christian World: but a good Christian is not always secure, or out of danger of being impos'd upon; when this Cause is varnished over, and painted before his Eyes, so as to appear quite another thing. Honest Men are often led by Knaves; and made the Tools of those, whom they would abhor, if they knew their Insides. They are often drawn in, to give Credit to a Cause, which, without their Presence, would not be tolerable: that so their Example may be urged in defense of what wants better Arguments.

Christianity doth not make Men more discerning, or more learned in the Wisdom of this World, than it finds them. But yet, it neither commands, nor disposes, Men to be cheated, and imposed upon, by every Pretense. It doth not instruct them to put on an Aire of Unconcernedness, or Indifference, in what respects the Happiness of Mankind, or the Society they belong to: nor doth it educate them in Stupidity, or a Disregard of every thing but their own private Devotion and Piety. But, as it is far from sending them into Desarts, and Solitudes; into Places unfrequented by humane Society; as it chiefly commends to them the Practice of those Virtues that adorn Conversation, and make the World about them happy: so it recommends to them somewhat of the Wisdom and Cunning of Serpents, as well as the Harmlessness and Innocence of Doves; lest the wicked and designing part of the World should manage their Innocence and Simplicity to the Mischief of others, and the Ruine of Peace; and render their Harmlessness as fatal in its Influence upon the World, as if they were cloth-

ed with Barbarity, and Cruelty. It is no advantageous Part, therefore, of a good Man's Character, who is obliged to act a *Publick Part*, that He sees with other Mens Eyes, or hears with other Mens Ears; or that he is, out of an affected Negligence, or fond Opinion of another's Abilities, or want of Resolution, led blindfold by others: because he may often be surprized into things of very ill Consequence; and, when he little thinks of it, bring a Scandal upon that Religion he heartily loves, by an unwary helping to make it serve the Purposes of Hatred, and Division.

What I have said under these two last Heads is this, That there are wicked and designing Men in the World, who will, if it be possible, contrive their Designs so, as that Religion and the Church shall be drawn in, to bear no inconsiderable Part in them; and that there are good and pious Men, who will not be at the pains to examine their Designs thoroughly; or who cannot see through all the Colour they can lay upon them; or who are too easily cheated, and allarm'd by their Pretenses: and that upon these Accounts it must so happen, that something in Religion will be too often made the Occasion of Disorder, and Uncharitableness, and Dissensions, and Persecutions, in the World of Christians.

-4. But, *Fourthly*, Much of this Unhappiness hath proceeded from Mens not being contented with the Simplicity of Christianity, as it is to be found in the Gospels: from their making new *Creeds*; their adding new Articles of Faith to those laid down in the New Testament; and laying new Impositions upon the rest of Christians, unknown to Christ and his Apostles. This I may safely affirm, that had Christians been always content with a mutual Agreement in the fundamental Doctrines of their Religion, as they lie in the Gospel it self; and the

in-

indispensable Obligation of the Practice of all the Duties commanded in it; much of this fatal Consequence of it might have been hinder'd; and very much of the Scandal redounding from it, have been prevented. But there hath ever been an Itch, in some or other of Power and Authority, to alter the Terms of Love and Concord settled by Christ; by framing some new Character, and some fresh Note of Distinction, among Christians: and this hath ever begot Opposition; and Controversies managed (on all sides) with Aggravations and Provocations; and this hath brought forth Variances, and Passion, and Hatred, in the Breasts of those who are sure to be condemned by their own Law, for want of Love and Charity. And it ever so happens, (as it hath been manifested by constant Experience,) that more Violence, which hath now for many Ages pass'd for Zeal: that more Violence, I say, is shewn for these Additions, and for these lesser, and undetermin'd Matters in which the Difference lies, than for the most fundamental Points of Faith, or the most necessary Points of Practice. In the Practical Duties, especially, Men seem easy enough: and would fain have it thought that the vilest, and most enormous Crimes are more tolerable in themselves; and more inoffensive and harmless to public Society; than a Difference in the least of their Additions.

The greatest (I would to God I could say the only) Instances of this, are to be seen where the *Romish Religion* is spread. Ask one of that Religion, why so much Barbarity and Inhumanity is exercised; and an eternal War sworn against some sort of Christians? Why are they hated, tormented, banished, imprisoned, and put to death? Do they not believe in God the Father Almighty, and in Jesus Christ? Do they not profess it to be their Faith, that there is but one God; that this God

sent his Son Jesus Christ into the World to save Sinners ; that He lived, and died, and arose again, and ascended up into Heaven to this Purpose ? And that He will come again to judge the World ; and that there is a future State of Rewards and Punishments ? Or, Are they wicked and debauched, immoral and vitious to that degree, that you fear the Vengeance of Heaven will fall on you, if you do not shew your Detestation of them ? What Answer will you receive from him ? There are few of them that would blush to tell you : (and yet who could do it without blushing ?) “ These are not
 “ the Things we so much concern our selves about.
 “ These Persons you speak of, believe all this, and
 “ more ; and their Conversations may perhaps be
 “ regular and exact. But this is not enough. They do
 “ not believe the Change of the Elements into
 “ Christ’s natural Body and Blood in the Eucharist.
 “ They do not hold themselves obliged to believe
 “ whatever the Church shall recommend to them.
 “ They do not believe the Pope, or General Coun-
 “ cils, infallible. They hold not the State of Purga-
 “ tory. They will not invoke Saints and Angels : or
 “ pray for the Dead. And therefore they are thus
 “ used. Now these, and the like, are their own In-
 “ ventions, and Additions, to the Law of Christ : and
 “ yet these Articles are the Standard of their Love, or
 “ Hatred ; and always determine their Behaviour to
 “ other Christians, whether it shall be humane or
 “ inhumane, civil or barbarous.

But we must not be so partial to our selves, as to confine this Observation to that Church ; or to such Additions, or Points not essential, as have been determined by it. I fear, it will be found, that too many who profess to have reformed from that *Church*, still retain too much of the Spirit of it ; and too often make their own Systems and Notions the Measure of their Affections ; and confine their cordial Love,

and

and Christian Charity, within the Bounds of their own Creed, or Manner of Worship. It is certainly true, that there have not been greater Hatreds, or more unchristian Malice, amongst Christians, than what have sprung from this Root: and therefore, this unhappy Consequence of Christianity must be charged, in great part, upon those Christians, who, not being content with the Simplicity of Christianity, as they found it in the Gospel, have been perpetually making Additions to it, according to their own various Opinions, or Designs.

5. *Fifthly*, Another Consideration near akin to this, is, that this Unhappiness amongst Christians hath chiefly proceeded from Men's mistaking the Nature, and main Design, of Christianity. Did Men but understand and consider that it was not the great Design of the Christian Religion to make all the World of one Opinion, in things of little Moment: but that it was reveled from Heaven, chiefly to restore the Worship of the *One Supreme God, in Spirit and in Truth*; and to teach Men to deny *Ungodliness and worldly Lusts*, and to live *soberly, righteously, and godly in this World*; they could not act the Part, they so often do. Did Men but consider, that the great Branch of Christian Duty, is Love, and Good-nature, and Humanity; and the distinguishing Mark of a Christian, an universal Charity; they could not but own that Jesus Christ came to plant and propagate these in the World. And then, they would abhor the Thoughts of making any thing in his Institution an Engine of Strife, and Malice, and Inhumanity. Then, they would not think all things lawful against those that differ from them; nor themselves obliged to crush, and ruine them. Then, the Contention between Men of various Minds would not be, who should have the Power of oppressing their Brethren: but the Contest would be, who should love most; and who should give the most expressive Demon-

Demonstrations of an unconfined Good-nature, and an unbounded Charity. But these are but Dreams, and Wishes!

It would sound something strange to say that the chief Design of Christianity is too plain to be understood, and too evident to be seen: and yet it is true, that the very Plainness of this makes it the less attended to. Such a Love there is in Men to something not so easy to be understood; nor of such Importance: and such a readiness to find out other Designs of Christianity more agreeable to their own worldly Projects!

Can any of all the fiery Zelots in the World shew us any Design more worthy of the Son of God's descending from Heaven, than the planting of Love in the World? more beneficial to the whole Race of Mankind; more for the Ease and internal Quiet of our own Breasts; or a better Preparative for the calm and serene Joys of Heaven: for the Fruition of that God who is Love, and of the Company of those blessed Spirits, who are the Witnesse, and Ministers, of his Love? Can they shew us any Design more plainly reveled in the Gospel; or any one Duty there laid upon us, to which this must at any time give place? If they cannot, then nothing can ever release us from our Obligation to Love, and Charity; or ever excuse the least degree of Hatred, and Malice, and Violence; much less, of Barbarity and Cruelty. Nay, how can it possibly be thought by any Christians, that a Religion which lays such Stress upon Peace, and Love; which dwells so eternally upon them; which was founded in Love, and so manifestly design'd for the propagating and establishing Good-nature in the World: how can it be imagined, that there is any thing in this Religion, that can give them occasion to hate, or disturb, or persecute, any of their Brethren? unless they can think that it self is so framed as to destroy its own Design;

to oppose its own main End, and Purpose ; and to dissolve the Obligation of its own Precepts. These things are inconsistent, and too absurd to be fasten'd upon Jesus Christ, by any who believe him sent of God. And would Men seriously attend to the Design of the Gospel, they could not fix such Absurdities upon it : Religion would be free from the Scandal of being the Occasion of Hatred, and Disturbance and Persecution, amongst Men ; and the World would be free from the Trouble and Plague of them ; Society would be happy ; and God would be glorified in the universal Practice of Love and Peace.

Having thus endeavour'd to give some Account, by what Men, and by what Methods, *Christianity* hath been made the Occasion of Quarrels, and Hatreds, and Persecutions, in the World ; and by what Means it hath been too much verified, that Christ *came not to send peace, but a sword* : I shall now, as I propos'd, in the last place,

IV. Make some proper Observations, and draw some useful Inferences, from what hath been said. And,

1st. Since it is plain from what hath been before said, that *Christianity* hath been the Occasion of Disturbances, Hatreds, and Persecutions, in the World ; not by means of any thing contained in it self naturally tending this way ; but by means of the Perverseness, and Weakness of Men, and particularly of Christians themselves : let us learn to distinguish between *Christianity*, and Christians ; and not blame the one, for the Faults of the other. Were there any thing in the Design or Doctrine of the Gospel, naturally tending to unhinge and confound the World ; it ought in reason to lie under the Imputation. But it ought not to suffer under such a Scandal, if it be it self wholly free from such a Tendency. Notwithstanding this, it hath fared with *Christianity*, as it hath done with many other Professions :

essions : the Faults of those who have professed it, have reflected Shame, and devolved an ill Name, upon it, whilst it utterly discountenances, and absolutely forbids, those very Faults.

Men take it usually very ill, in the Affairs of this World, that any Profession or Calling amongst them, should suffer Disgrace, and fall in the good Esteem of other Men, for the sake of the Crimes, and ill Behaviour, of some of those who pretend to belong to it : and they always argue, that it is the most unjust thing in the World, it should do so, unless it can be shewn, that it does command, or encourage, any such Practices ; much more, when it condemns, and threatens Punishment to them. And yet they scruple not to deal by the Christian Religion after the manner they think it hard their own Secular Professions should be dealt with ; and draw up an heavy Accusation against *that*, made up of a long Catalogue of the Crimes of its Professors.

Far be such unreasonable Proceedings from all who pretend to judge reasonably. Blame not the *Christian Religion* for what it most unwillingly, and against its own Injunctions, is forc'd to be the Cause of ; but blame the Perverseness of those, who, wittingly and willingly, oblige it to be an Instrument to their Purposes. Inveigh not against a Religion, which is framed to conquer Mens Passions : but inveigh against the Passions of those, who will not suffer it to conquer them ; but press Religion it self into the Service of them. Say not, that Christianity is not good, and of beneficial Influence upon the Happiness of the World ; but say, that Men will not suffer it to shew its Power upon them ; Men will not bear to be, what that would have them be. Be not ready to be scandalized at the Gospel, because it hath thus sent, *not Peace, but, a Sword upon the Earth* : but be offended at those who have brought this Evil to pass, solely for their own Worldly Interest ; in order to
pro-

promote their own wicked Ends, and to satisfy their own private Views. *Wo be to the world because of offenses, for it must needs be that offenses come; but wo to that man by whom they come.* It must needs be, that the Passions and Wickedness of Men will bring forth Variance, and Disturbance in the World: and this will reflect a Dishonour upon the Religion it self, under which they hide themselves. But *Wo* to those Men who are the proper Cause of this Unhappiness to their Fellow-Creatures; and of this Objection against the Gospel.

I shall only here add one Observation, that it cannot be a tolerable ground of Offense against Religion, that something in it hath been turned to evil Purposes, and to the Disquiet of Mankind; because this is really an Argument, that it is in it self good: it being certain, that the better any thing is, the more willing are designing Men to hide their main Designs under the Cover of it; and the more ready to use it as an Instrument to make the World about them the more readily fall in with their Measures.

This leads me, *2dly*, to observe from what hath been said, How much the best things may be abused; and to what ill Purposes the Wickedness and Weakness of Men, can turn the most excellent Institutions of God himself. In his dealings with Men, Almighty God doth not actuate their Wills, or Resolutions, with an irresistible Arm; but proposes to them sufficient Arguments to receive what he offers them, and sufficient Assistance to perform what he commands: still leaving to them a Place for Reward, if they submit to him; or of Punishment, if they do not. Here we have an Instance (an almost incredible, and very surprizing, Instance) of the strange Perverseness of humane Nature, and the Ingratitude of Men to the Love of God. He, in Mercy, proposes a Revelation to them, perfectly quali-

qualified to make them easy here, as well as happy hereafter. Some not only reject it themselves, but hate, and persecute, and extirpate those who preach it, and propose it to them. Others, indeed, receive it, and profess it : but, instead of conforming their Tempers and Lives to its Precepts, and studying the Advantage, and Happiness, of the World they live in, they presently turn their Thoughts upon what private Advantages they can make of it ; what account they can make it turn to ; what there is in it, for their Ambition, or Covetousness, or Revenge, to employ in their Service ; what there is in it proper for them to work with, in order to raise themselves, and depress others.

Thus have the wicked part of the World turn'd into Poyson, and Ruine, what was design'd for their Health, and Strength ; and converted into a common Plague, and Disturbance, what was exactly qualified to establish and confirm humane Society in Quiet, and Happiness. But whither at length will the Perverseness of Men procede, when so sacred, and useful, a thing hath not been able to withstand it ? For what can be thought of, that is more truly qualified for other, and better Purposes ; for the universal Interest, and Peace, of the World, than the Christian Religion ? What more worthy of God to revele ; or of Man to receive, and practice ? And yet, what hath been ever more abused ; or perverted to worse, and more detestable Purposes ? But this, as it shews us the perverse Tendency of humane Nature, when it is once debauch'd by worldly Principles, and drawn aside from the Paths of strict Virtue : so it leads us

3dly, To consider what an Account some Men have to make ; and what a Punishment *They* have waiting for them, who are guilty of so unpardonable an Abuse of God's Mercy in the Dispensation of the Gospel. Invain do those who are the proper Causes

ses of these unhappy Consequences of the *Christian Religion*, think to lie hid, or to escape free, with all the private Advantages they procure to themselves. Invain doth the *Atheist*, who puts the Guise of Religion upon what He undertakes, flatter himself with the Hopes of Security, and Impunity. Invain do the Sceptics, and irreligious Men, who colour over their Designs with something taken from Christianity, laugh inwardly at the Multitude, whom they have deceiv'd with these Pretenses. Almighty God sees it all : and knows the unfaithful Turnings and Windings of their Hearts : and treasures up all, against the Day of Accounts. And then, what Punishment can we believe too great, for such Hypocrisy, and such Crimes ? To them belongs the Guilt of greater Ingratitude, than can be expressed in Words ; the Guilt of perverting an Institution from the Design of God, to the Purposes of the Devil ; from the Purposes of Union and Quiet, to the Purposes of Division and Unhappiness. To them belongs the Guilt of scandalizing many against the Christian Religion : the Guilt of bringing a Disgrace upon it ; and of recommending *that* to the Hatred and Aversion of many in the World, which, if it had not been for such professed Christians, might have made a lasting good Impression upon them, and have prevail'd with them to the eternal Salvation of their Souls.

These Men indeed at present cannot be disturbed at the thoughts of this : because they can have no sense of what they not do believe. And that they do not believe this, is plain from their Behaviour. For how can they pervert and abuse Religion to their own wicked Purposes ; if they believe any thing of the Punishments it threatens, and the Terrours it proposes ? But this Security, and false Peace, will not last for ever. Death will put a stop to all their Projects : and after Death comes the Judgment ; the
Judg-

Judgment before an All-knowing and Almighty Judge ; One that cannot be imposed upon, and cannot be resisted ; and One, who will certainly punish them according to their Works. *They have their Reward* here, if their Pretenses take, and their false Colours delude the World for a while, at present : but the Scene will quickly change, from a State of Design and Hypocrisy, into a State of that Misery, which hath been denounced, and will certainly be executed, upon *Hypocrites*. There are some sort of *Hypocrites*, who do some Service and Credit to *Religion*, if they be never discover'd by Men : but these are a sort of *Hypocrites*, the Consequence of whose *Hypocrisy* is as fatal to Christianity, as the most open and profligate Wickedness. For their *Hypocrisy*, and Pretense to a Regard to something in Religion, tends visibly to unhinge the World ; and, in its Consequences, brings a perpetual Scandal upon the Religion they profess, by prostituting it to the Service of vile Lusts, and Passions ; by procuring great Temporal Advantages to Themselves, and numberless Miseries to Others. Such as these must not expect the Punishment only of ordinary *Hypocrites* : but somewhat as Extraordinary in the Reward of their *Hypocrisy*, as that hath been Extraordinary in its mischievous Influences upon the World, and its Disservice to Religion.

4thly, Since this is the way of bad Men ; and Religion, and the Church, are often made the Pretense for very bad Things : it concerns others to be upon their Guard not to be deceiv'd, as these are continually upon their watch to impose upon them. Next to the not being guilty of this themselves, the great Care of Men ought to be, that they be not led away by those that are so ; and so contribute by their Carelessness, or easiness of Temper, to, what they would otherwise abhor, the Scandal of Religion, and the Disquiet of the Society they are related to.

Why

Why, indeed, should it not be accounted a Duty, to be as watchful to prevent such Mischiefs, as some are to bring them to pass? to be as prepared to fence against them, as some are always to forward them? Or, why should *honest* Men incur some part of the Guilt of the *Wicked*, by not thinking it worth their while either to understand them rightly, or to oppose them heartily?

sthly, and *lastly*, Since the Guilt of those who have an hand in making any thing in Religion subservient to the Purposes of Dissension, Hatred, and Persecution, is so great: Let us take care not to be of the Number of those who do this, in the least degree imaginable. There hath been enough already done to verify this Prediction of our Lord's, that *He came not to send Peace, but a Sword*. He will thank us, if we will at length leave off to prove the Truth of it by our Example. Enough of Persecution, and Violence, and Hatred, hath been founded on Religion. Designing Men have cheated the World long enough: and long enough hath the *Gospel* lain under the Scandal of the Vices of others; and of encouraging those Passions which it came to tame. It is time now for *Christians* to consider that their Business is *Peace*; and their Religion *Love*: and that Christianity is sufficiently qualified to make them taste of Happiness, even here below, if they do not themselves hinder it. Let us remember this: and think, if we can be too careful to do our Parts towards the retrieving the Goodname of Religion; and the restoring it to its primitive and original Design.

F I N I S.

III.

A LETTER

To the Reverend

Dr. Francis Atterbury :

Occasion'd by the

DOCTRINE

Deliver'd by him in a

FUNERAL-SERMON ON I Cor. 15. 19.

August 30. 1706.

*Length of Days is in her Right-hand : and in her
Left-hand Riches and Honour. Her Ways are
Ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.
Prov. 3. 16, 17.*

O Vitæ Philosophia Dux ! O Virtutum inda-
gatrix, expultrixque Vitiorum ! Unus dies
bene, & ex Præceptis tuis, actus, peccanti
Immortalitati est anteponendus. *Cicero.*

Written in the Year, 1706.

III

A LETTER

To the Reverend

Dr. Francis Atterbury

Occasion'd by the

DOCTRINE

Deliver'd by him in a

FUNERAL-SERMON ON 1 Cor. 15. 12.

May 30. 1706.

Length of Day is in her Right-hand: and in her
Left-hand Riches and Honour. Her Ways are
Way of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.
Prov. 1. 16, 17.

O Viri Philosophi Docti! O Viri summi inda-
gentis, expulsiq; Vindictam! Tunc dis-
tincte, & ex Proceptis eius, alios, potant
Immortalitatis et aeternitatis. Certe.

Written in the Year, 1706.

LETTER

To the Reverend

Dr. *Francis Atterbury*:

OCCASION'D

By the Doctrine deliver'd by him in a
Funeral-Sermon, *August 30. 1706.*

Reverend Sir,

THE Concern which all serious Christians ought to have for the Cause of *Virtue*, and the Interest of *Practical Religion*, will easily plead my Excuse for addressing myself to you upon this Occasion, and after so Publick a manner. It is not the Design of this Trouble I give you, to detract from that *Character* which you have bestow'd on the *Gentleman*, at whose *Funeral the Sermon* now before me was preach'd: So far from that, that I rejoice in it; and heartily wish that it may have so good an effect upon all who read it, as to engage them to study to deserve the like. Nor is it my Design to lend any hand to the exposing you to the World. As it would be a vain Presumption in an obscure Person to pretend to lessen a Reputation so establish'd as *yours*: so, I hope, I have Sense enough of my *Christian Duty*, to induce me to abhor so base and unchristian an

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Intention

Intention. But the same *Christian Duty*, which forbids me to do this, engageth me to express a Concern upon all Occasions for the *Cause of Religion*; and to contribute all in my Power towards the right understanding the Nature of *Virtue*, and the Maxims and Precepts laid down in *Holy Scripture*. To speak plainly, The *Doctrine* deliver'd in your late Sermon at the *Funeral* of Mr. B. hath offended many serious, and understanding *Christians*: who cannot but esteem it false, and pernicious in it self; and utterly foreign from the Intention of St. Paul, on whom in great measure you fix it. This is the true Reason of the Trouble I now give you. And I do it after a Publick manner, because the *Doctrine* you have deliver'd is now Publick; because it is fit that in so important a matter every one should see what can be said on each side, and judge themselves concerning the Meaning of the *Apostle*, and the Truth of the matter; and because you may probably be more effectually engaged by this means either to defend your *Doctrine* with stronger Arguments, or to retract it in as Publick a manner as you have deliver'd it: One of which I cannot but think the Duty of a *Christian Divine*, when such *Objections* are proposed to him, in any important matter, as seem to have some Weight in them; and appear to proceed from no other Principle, but a Desire that *Truth* may prevail.

In order, therefore, to contribute something to the Satisfaction of others; and to engage your self to review with all serious Impartiality the Doctrinal Part of your late Sermon; permit me,

I. To represent to you what seems to me the true Intention of St. Paul, in that Passage, from whence you have taken the Rise of your Discourse.

II. To endeavour to shew you from hence, how extremely foreign from that purpose of the *Apostle*,

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your *Discourse* is : both as to what you have expressly fixed upon *Him* ; and as to what you insinuate to be agreeable to His purpose, tho' not necessarily imply'd in the *Letter* of the *Text*.

III. To endeavour to make you sensible, that the *Doctrine* you have delivered is as *false* in it self, as it is remote from the Intention of *St. Paul*, by offering to your Thoughts some Observations concerning your manner of proceeding in the *Argument* you have undertaken.

I. I beg leave to represent to you what seems to me to be the true *Intention* of *St. Paul* in that place, (1 Cor. 15. 19.) from whence you have taken the Rise of your *Discourse*.

As to this, I need not observe to you, that He is there arguing against some very weak Persons in the *Church of Corinth*, who professed to believe in *Jesus Christ* ; and yet denied the general Resurrection at the last Day, and consequently the Rewards of a Future State. In answer to these Persons, He first establisheth the Certainty of the *Resurrection* of *Christ* himself, upon the Testimony of many credible Witnesses, who saw him, and conversed with him after his Resurrection ; from Verse the *First*, to Verse the *Twelfth*. From the *Resurrection* of *Christ*, by which *Almighty God* professedly gave the World a Pledge and Assurance of the *Resurrection* of other dead Men, he proceeds to argue, that *others* also shall arise from the *Dead*. For if it be false that *other* Men shall arise from the *Dead* ; then will it follow, that it is false that *Christ* is risen from the *Dead* : God having constituted *his* Resurrection an Assurance of *their* Resurrection ; and made the *one* as certainly to come, as the *other* is certainly *past*. If therefore the *one* be not certainly to come ; it will follow that the *other* is not certainly *past*. But the Resurrection of *Christ* is certainly *past* ; as I have already proved from the

Testimony of Eye-Witnesses: Therefore the Supposition that *others* shall not arise, from whence the contrary would follow, is false; and consequently, Other Men will likewise arise from the Dead. This seems to me, to be the *Apostle's* Argument: as may appear more plainly, if we connect the *Twentieth* verse to the *Thirteenth*; and read the 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, as included in a *Parentthesis*. For the whole Argument appears in those two Verses thus connected. Ver. 13. If there will be no Resurrection of the Dead; it will follow from hence, that *Christ* himself is not risen. Ver. 20. But *Christ* himself is certainly risen, and become the First-fruits of them that sleep; therefore *they* also shall certainly arise: Which Conclusion he farther pursues and illustrates. In that *Parentthesis*, he goes on to urge, upon those weak Believers, the Consequences of that Absurdity he had reduced them to, *That Christ was not risen*; instead of immediately pursuing his main Argument, turning off a little to something incidental to it, (as we find Him often doing in other Arguments,) and speaking to them to this purpose. Ver. 14. And if *Christ* be not risen, as is imply'd in your Denial of the Resurrection of other Men, it is the vainest and most fruitless thing imaginable, for *us* to preach him; or for *you* to believe in him. Ver. 15. Nay, for *our* parts, we shall be found False-witnesses for God; because we have pretended to witness, that God hath raised *Christ* from the Dead; whom in truth He hath not raised, if it be true that other dead Persons shall never arise. [Ver. 16. For I must tell you again, this is the Consequence of your Opinion, If it be true that the Dead shall not arise, it follows from hence, as I shew'd you before, that *Christ* is not himself risen.] Ver. 17. And, for *your* parts, I tell you again, if *Christ* be not risen, it is the vainest thing in the World for *you* to believe in him. You cannot

not by this hope for any Justification, or Acquittance from the Guilt and Punishment of your Sins; which you have been encouraged to hope for: For God promiseth no Justification, but upon supposition of *Christ's* Resurrection, *who died for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification.* Ver. 18. Nay, if Christ be not risen, it follows that all those who are now dead in Christ; all who have laid down their Lives for his sake; have lost their Labour, and are utterly perish'd without hope. Now if you would not be thought thus to reflect on those glorious *Martyrs*, whom you pretend to commemorate with Honour; why are you so foolish as to deny the Resurrection of Men at the last Day, which by Consequence, you see, destroys the Certainty of *Christ's* own Resurrection; and by that means reflects so highly upon those who have died *in, and for, his* Faith. Then follows your *Text*, Ver. 19. In one word, this Absurdity of Christ's not being arisen from the Dead, (which follows from your denial of a general Resurrection,) makes the Condition of all who now believe in him much more miserable than that of other Men. For, if our Hope in *Christ* do not extend it self to another Life; and we do not consider, and believe in, Him, as a Person raised from the Dead, and now alive in another and better State; we Christians, consider'd in the present Circumstances of things, and in the midst of those constant and bitter Persecutions in which we live, are the most to be pitied, and indeed the most miserable, of all Men: being exposed to the most grievous Sufferings, not only for a Falshood, but for the sake of a Person who is utterly extinct, and unable to do us any Service. After his having urged these Absurdities upon those weak and imperfect Believers, he resumes his Argument, Ver. 20. and proceeds in it, as I have before observed.

That he speaks this, merely with respect to
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the bitter Sufferings, to which the Profession of *Christianity* then exposed its Professors, is evident from Ver. 30, 31, 32. where the *Apostle* speaks of himself to this effect: *To what purpose, and for what advantage, do I endure those grievous Persecutions, which are as it were a continual and daily Death, for the sake of my Profession, if it be not true at last, that there is a Resurrection and a Future State, in which I may hope for a Reward? Upon this Supposition, that we must utterly perish at Death, it were better and wiser for us, not to profess a groundless Faith, which exposeth us now to continual Persecutions, without any Advantage; but rather to take such Methods, as that we may enjoy the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life, as quietly, and with as little disturbance, as our Neighbours.* Thus much may suffice for the establishing, and making clear, the *Apostle's* Reasoning, and Intention, in this place. I proceed now,

II. To endeavour to shew you how extremely foreign from this purpose of the *Apostle*, your Discourse is, with respect both to what you have expressly fixed upon *Him*; and to what you insinuate to be agreeable to his purpose, tho' not necessarily imply'd in the *Letter of the Text*.

First, You are pleased to call your Text, a *Concession*, which *St. Paul* openly makes to this Purpose, *If all the Benefits we expect from the Christian Institution were confined within the Bounds of this present Life; and we had no hopes of a better State after this; of a great and lasting Reward in a Life to come; we Christians should be the most abandoned and wretched of Creatures: all other Sorts and Sects of Men would evidently have the Advantage of us, and a much surer Title to Happiness than we.* This is what you expressly, and in so many Words, fix upon the *Apostle*, as his Design in this Passage, P. 3. Ed. 8vo.

Now we usually, I think, call that a *Concession*, which is yielded to an Adversary; and contended for

for by him : not *that*, which he is unwilling to own, and which upon that account we urge upon him, in order to oblige him to disown something else from which that follows. And this I take to be the Case here. The *Apostle* is not *conceding* to those weak Believers any thing they contended for: but is manifestly urging them with something, which he thought would startle them; an *Absurdity* they were not aware of; in order to oblige them to disown that Error from which this *Absurdity* follows. He seems to speak to them to this purpose. Your Denial of the general Resurrection implies in it a Denial of Christ's Resurrection: And the Denial of Christ's Resurrection by consequence proves his Disciples, in these, times the most miserable, and the most weak of all Men: who, by professing to believe in one who is utterly perished, expose themselves to the most grievous Persecutions. If therefore you would not bring this Scandal upon your own Profession; you must not hold such an Opinion as manifestly tends to it in its Consequences. This is evidently no *Concession*; but what we call *Argumentum ab Absurdo*: which is a very different thing.

But, to let this pass: the main *Question* is, Whether your *Paraphrase* upon your Text be just, and well-grounded. There are two Parts of it: and, as I think, both very foreign from the *Apostle's* purpose. 1. That, upon the Supposition he makes in the Text, *We Christians should be the most abandoned and wretched of Creatures*. 2. That, upon the same Supposition, *all other Sorts and Sects of Men would evidently have the Advantage of us; and a much surer Title to Happiness than we*. I say, both these are fixed upon the *Apostle* without any Ground.

For, 1. The *Apostle* doth not appear to have once thought of such an unhandsome Comparison, as the estate of good *Christians*, in this World, and the estate

estate of *Brutes*; unless the Word which we translate *Men*, can be proved to signify *Beasts* also: And much less to have designed, by an Assertion limited to the Times of most grievous Persecutions, to determine, that, even in the ordinary and quiet Course of God's Providence, *Good Christians* are more miserable than *Beasts*, in this World; as, it is plain, you intend in what you here fix upon the *Apostle*.

2. The *Apostle* doth not say that, upon the Supposition in the Text, *All other Sorts and Sects of Men have a surer Title to Happiness than true Christians*: Unless you can make that a general Proposition, and accommodate it to all Times; which he hath made a particular one, by accommodating it manifestly to the Times only of the bitterest Persecutions; without the least Insinuation that their Unhappiness proceeded from their strict Observation of the Moral Rules of their Profession, (as you expressly maintain;) or from any other Cause, but the accidental Barbarity of the World about them, at that Time, towards all who professed Faith in *Jesus Christ*.

Secondly, I observe, that you first propose (as your own Words are) to shew the undoubted Truth of the *Apostle's Concession*; and then perform this, by urging it somewhat farther than the Letter of the Text will carry us: Which is indeed a new way of proving the Truth of his Concession, viz. by making Concessions of your own; and then labouring the Proof of them. But you would, to be sure, insinuate by this, that these Concessions, (as you call them,) which you here illustrate, are agreeable to the Design, tho' not to the Letter, of the Text. Nay, Pag. 9. you expressly fix them upon the *Apostle*, and call the Argument into which you have put these Concessions, that great Argument for a future State, which is urged by *St. Paul* in the Words before us.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, You cannot, therefore, blame me, if I be so concern'd lest any well-meaning Persons should be deceiv'd by this, as to give them notice that there is nothing in the *Apostle's* Words or Design, which bears the least resemblance to what you here seem to fix upon him. For, 1. He is as far from saying that, *were there no Life after this, Men would really be more miserable than Beasts* (as your words are) as it is well possible to be imagined: as may appear by comparing this Proposition with the Proposition of *St. Paul* in the Text, *viz.* That if *Christians* had no hopes in *Christ*, as arisen from the Dead, and now alive at *God's Right-hand*; they were the most miserable of all Men, to expose themselves to the bitterest Persecutions, for the sake of a Falshood, and of a Man utterly extinct, and unable to assist, or reward them; as they did, at the time when this was written. If the former of these Propositions bear any relation (even the most distant possible) to the latter; nay, if the same Person who maintains the latter, may not justly abhor, and detest the former; I confess, I understand nothing of Logic or good Sense. By what Right, therefore, you have in any sort charged this fond Opinion of your own, upon so great an Author, I leave to you to consider; and to every serious Reader to judge. Neither, 2. Can any such Proposition be built upon the *Apostle's* Words, as your second, *viz.* That *were there no Life after this, the best Men would be often the most miserable*: I mean, in the Sense in which you your self afterwards explain it; nay, nor in any Sense which I can think of. That the best Men are sometimes in this state the most miserable; as far as the Evils of this World can make them so, may possibly be true: But it is equally true, whether you suppose a Future State; or suppose it not. But I deny that the Evils of this World which they sometimes experience, as you have represented them, are sufficient to prove the *Wicked* more truly

ly happy than the Virtuous, even in this state ; and supposing no Life to come. This I shall have occasion to speak of, by and by. At present I observe, that this Proposition of yours hath no relation to the Design of the *Apostle* in the *Text* : which I think is very evident from hence, that the same Person may maintain, (as the *Apostle* doth in the *Text*,) that *if Christians have no ground of hope in Jesus Christ as arisen from the Dead, and alive in another State, they are the most miserable of Men, as being exposed by their Profession to constant and bitter Persecutions, without any present or future Advantage* ; I say, the same Person may maintain this, and yet deny with Justice the Truth of the following Proposition, (which is yours,) viz. *That if there were no Life after this, the best of Men would be often the most miserable, i. e. as you explain it, that the Practice of the Moral Duties of the Christian Religion would, in the ordinary and quiet state of this World, be a greater Unhappiness to a Man, than the Neglect, and Violation of them.* This is, in Truth, a *Concession* : but such an one, I must tell you, as the *Apostle* might abhor, notwithstanding his *Affertion* in your *Text* ; and such an one, as I am sorry to see made by any *Preacher of Righteousness*. But, before I come to examine the Truth of these two *Concessions*, which you have here made to the Cause of Vice ; as I proposed in the last place ; I must observe,

Fourthly, That, as you have sadly mistaken the *Apostle's* Words in your *Text* : so you have likewise widely wandered from the *Inference* he design'd should be drawn from it. *Pag. 8, 9.* For He is not urging here an Argument, which should conclude absolutely in favour of a future State. His main and conclusive Argument for the *general Resurrection*, is the *Resurrection of Christ* : which he resumes in the next Verse. But here he is pressing them with some Considerations which he judged would peculiarly
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move them ; and endeavours to make them sensible of the bad Tendency of their false Opinion, which they were so weak as not to see, by Words to this effect : *By denying the general Resurrection, you call in question the Resurrection of Christ himself ; and by doing this you make Christians the most miserable of Men ; to expose themselves by their Profession to bitter and daily Persecutions, without any Advantage from their Master, either in this World, or in another. If you would not, therefore, cast this blot upon the Christian Religion ; you must not maintain such Notions as by consequence infer this.* How distant is this from the Argument which you have expressly fixed upon St. Paul, Pag. 9. in these Words. *If in this Life only we had hope, Men would really be more miserable than Beasts ; and the best of Men often the most miserable. But it is impossible to imagine that a God of infinite Wisdom and Goodness should distribute Misery and Happiness so unequally, and absurdly. It remains, therefore, that good Men have a well-grounded hope in another Life ; and are as certain of a future Recompence, as they are of the Being, and Attributes of God. God forbid it should be otherwise ! but, God forbid they should build their Assurance of it on such Assertions as these : which I know not to have been ever, before this, seriously maintain'd by any Person of Virtue and Understanding ; much less, to have been solemnly dictated, as Undoubted Truths, from the Pulpit, and built upon the Authority of an Apostle.*

The Result of the whole is this. The *Apostle* speaks of *Christians* professing Faith in Christ : You speak of Persons practising the Moral Precepts of Religion. The *Apostle* speaks of the Condition of such *Christians*, in a state of the most bitter Persecution : You speak of the Condition of virtuous Persons, in the ordinary Course of God's Providence. The *Apostle* designs nothing by his Assertion and Supposition, but to shame those ignorant unwary Professors of Christianity out of their Denial of a general Resurrection :

tion: You, on the contrary, draw from your Supposition, and Assertions, an absolute Argument for the Certainty of a Future State. So that, upon the review, it seems evident that you have mistaken the *Assertion* it self, which the Apostle layeth down in the Text; the *Persons* concerning whom He intends it; the *Times* to which He manifestly limits it; and the *Conclusion* which he design'd should be drawn from it.

Having thus said what is sufficient to shew how foreign from the Design of the *Apostle*, the *Propositions*, and *Argument*, which you have been pleased to fix upon Him, are; I proceed now, as I propos'd,

III. To endeavour to make you sensible that the *Doctrine* you have deliver'd, according to your own Explication of it, is as false in it self, as it is remote from the Intention of St. Paul. And this I shall do, by offering to you some Observations upon your manner of proceeding in the Argument you have undertaken.

Your *Positions* are these, in your own Words, That, *were there no Life after this*, First, *Men would really be more miserable than Beasts*; and Secondly, *The best Men would be often the most miserable*: I mean, as far as Happiness or Misery are to be measured from pleasing or painful Sensations. And supposing the present to be the only Life we are to lead, I see not but that this might be esteem'd the true measure of them. In these Words you declare, as plainly as one could expect from any *Christian Divine*, that, supposing no Life after this, the Practice of Virtue would not be the *Happiness* of Man: but the Pursuit of those Bodily Pleasures, which the *Beasts* are capable of enjoying. An Opinion, which, whatever *Christians* may think of it, the best of the *Heathen Philosophers* would have detested. I was going to say, and the worst likewise: For I may venture to affirm that *Epicurus* himself was far from speaking at this rate concerning Virtue; tho'

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he absolutely deny'd, not only a *Future State*, but the Superintendency of any wise Providence over *this*. And these Positions you maintain, without once supposing such a State of Persecution, as the *Apostle* pointed at : But with reference to the most quiet and prosperous Condition of this Life ; supposing, throughout the whole, Man to be, what He is, a Rational Creature ; and supposing your good Man to be a good *Christian* ; not only to know God, but to have the present Support of the Belief of a Future State, and that firm Expectation of Rewards which such an one ought to have. You suppose him to lead a Life of Virtue, upon such Motives : and yet you positively affirm, that the *Beasts*, and *Wickedest* of Men, enjoy here below a *more entire and perfect Happiness* than this good Man ; even in the most quiet and prosperous Condition of this Life. But, to proceed to my *Observations*.

1. It hath a very strange appearance, that, after you have called these, *Undoubted Truths* ; which cannot be true, unless that Notion be so, on which they are entirely founded, *viz.* That *Happiness and Misery in this state are to be measured by pleasing and painful bodily Sensations* ; and that, after you have undertaken the Proof of these *Undoubted Truths*, you should not say the least word for the Proof of *that* on which only they can be founded ; but take *that* for granted, which is the main Point in Dispute ; and fly to the Demonstration of *that*, which signifies nothing, without having first demonstrated the Truth of the other. This, I say, is a very strange way of proceeding, in so important a matter as this.

2. It is likewise as unaccountable, that, in making the Comparison, first between *Men* and *Beasts* ; and then between the *Best* and the *Worst* of Men ; you should not once mention any single Instance of the Excellence of the former above the latter. This certainly might be expected at your hands, when

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you undertook to state this Point ; to consider all things on all sides, before you determine on which part the greatest Happiness lies, in any state. This indeed is but the Continuance of the former way of Procedure. But one would have thought, that, even supposing no other state after this, it were some Advantage to be made capable of knowing God ; of imitating Him ; of seeing Him in his Works ; of studying and finding out Truth. One would have thought that the Pleasures of true Learning, and sound Sense ; the Pleasures of Friendship, and honest Society ; of interchanging mutual Good Offices ; of contributing to the Ease and Happiness of our Fellow-Creatures ; and of the Practice of many Virtues, which are Happiness it self, might have been worth the mentioning : Not to say, might have been accounted by you far beyond the Pleasures of Sense, even in this state. But it seems these are nothing in themselves, when compared with the noble Pleasures which the *Beasts* so freely enjoy. And yet, one thing methinks so naturally offer'd it self upon this Head, that it cou'd hardly escape the Observation of one who places so much Happiness in such things, *viz.* that *Men* have a liberty of enjoying the *Bodily Pleasures* with Temperance, and under some reasonable Restraints ; as well as the *Beasts* : and, besides this, enjoy those Advantages before-mentioned.

3. It is again wonderful, that you should not think it worth your while to mention any single Disadvantage either of *Beasts*, in their being made wholly incapable of these God-like Satisfactions ; or of wicked Men, in the Prosecution of their *Lusts* and *Passions*. What ? Is it of no account, that wicked Men follow their Inclinations, even upon your own Supposition, in contradiction to their Reason ? Or, Is this an happier state than to follow Reason, and imitate God, in contradiction to Inclination ?

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Doth not the latter necessarily leave the *Man* in a more happy present state, than the former? Or, Are those Lashes of Conscience, under which you suppose the Wicked, of no manner of Consideration? Is it of no account, that the Intemperate Pursuit of the Pleasures the Wicked chuse, destroys even their own Design; and leads them into a thousand Sicknesses, Disturbances, Perplexities, Deaths: which the Virtuous keep off by their Temperance, and Chastity, and Command over their Appetites? Is it of no account, that Envy, Malice, Revenge, Insatiable Desire of Riches, or Honours, are present Unhappiness in themselves; and that the Virtues contrary to them are Inward Peace, and Harmony, and Quiet? Is it of no account, that many Vices impair the Health; destroy the Vigor of the Mind; hasten Death; ruine Estates; disturb Families; render Men the Scorn and Contempt of the good part of the World? And are not these certain Inconveniences, and Unhappinesses, in this present state: and such as were fit to be mentioned? Is it of no account, that Wicked Men are as liable to Sicknes, and Afflictions, as the Good; and want those Supports in them, which the Good, and Upright, upon your own Supposition, enjoy: nay, that their very Successes in this World are very frequently the Occasions, and Instruments, even of their present Ruine, and Unhappiness? And, why, I pray, should all this be overlooked, for the sake of those brutish Pleasures, in which they indulge themselves, even beyond the Example of *Beasts*?

4. It is wonderfully strange, that you should not consider, that the Chief Happiness of any Being, in whatsoever state it is; or of what Duration soever its Life is; must result from the most excellent Part of its Constitution: that the Happiness of a Being made capable of imitating God, tho' for never

so short a time, must consist in that Imitation ; that Virtue is the Imitation of God, and therefore, must be the Happiness of Man ; that the chief Happiness of a reasonable Creature must consist in living as Reason directs, whether he lives one Day, or to Eternity ; whether he lives in this state only, or in another afterwards ; whether he hath Inclinations to the contrary, or not ; provided they be such, as may be conquered. For neither can the time of his Duration, or the Tendency of such Inclinations, alter any thing in this matter ; unless to make Virtue more difficult : which doth not destroy the Excellence of it ; or the present Happiness resulting from it ; but enhance and improve them. Besides, on the other hand, the Practice of Vice, tho' it be *with* the Inclination ; yet, is *against* Reason, and Conscience, upon your own *Hypothesis* : and leads the Man to greater Disquiet, and Unhappiness, than is implied in resisting a present Inclination, when *Reason* and *Conscience* direct. It is very strange likewise, that you should not consider, that the Pleasures and good things of this Life, properly so called, and true Happiness in this Life, are two very different things ; that they are much oftner separated, than united ; and that they who pursue the *former* within the Bounds of Religion, have always most of the *latter*, in the ordinary Course of this World ; to which your *Positions* are adapted.

5. On the other hand, it is equally strange, that you should not consider the Consequences of such a *Principle*, as you build upon ; that, upon your Supposition, the Imitation of God, tho' it should not expose to any considerable external Calamities, is not to be compared, for Happiness, to the greedy pursuit of the Bestial Pleasures ; or the Riches, and Honours of this World : that, supposing *Man* and *Beast* both immortal in this *State*, it had been eligible

ble to have been made a *Beast*, rather than a *Man*; or to be the most *Wicked*, than the most *Virtuous* of Men; that *Virtue* doth not in its own Nature tend so much to the Happiness of Man, in the most quiet state of this World, as the *Bestial* Enjoyments, pursu'd even against the Dictates of Conscience, and under the Apprehension of a future Reckoning. I might name many more Absurdities, coincident with these, which follow from your *Principle*; as you appear to have understood it your self. But these are sufficient to deter any Man from maintaining it: And I here mention them, not to charge them upon *You*; but upon your *Doctrine*, in order to shew you the Unreasonableness of it.

6. It is likewise unaccountable, that you should not consider the bad Influences such *Positions* must have, upon *some* Men; and the no Service of them to any good Purposes. For by this performance of yours you have unwarily put more into the Mouths of *licentious* Persons, than they ever yet generally contended for; It having been often owned by many of them, that the steady Practice of *Virtue* is more eligible even in this World, than the contrary, unless in a state of bitter Persecution; if ever there were, or can be, a Persecution merely for the sake of the Moral Virtues of any Persons; which I much question. Whereas *You* suppose no Case of *Persecution*; and yet concede to them, or rather contend for them, that the Practice of *Vice* tends to greater Happiness, (supposing no state but the present,) than the strict Practice of *Virtue*. Your *Positions* deprive the Cause of *Virtue*, of a very good and proper Argument to recommend it to the Trial of any Persons who are Strangers to it, *viz.* That it will contribute even to their present Happiness, much more than *Vice*; that it will more consult the Ease of their Minds, the Health of their Bodies, the Preservation and Increase of their Estates, the

Establishment of their good Name; all which are, in their several degrees, present Happiness. Your *Doctrine* robs even *Christianity* it self of an excellent Argument, viz. That the Moral Virtues it recommends, are in themselves infinitely preferable to the Vices contrary to them; and much more conducive to the present Happiness of Man, as well as to his future. It seems to contradict several *Texts* of *Scripture*, which declare at least thus much, that, in the ordinary Course of God's Providence, the Virtuous Man doth more truly enjoy Happiness, even in this Life, than the Wicked. And it gives a wide Encouragement to Men who have no Faith, or a very weak one, concerning *Future Rewards*, to disturb Humane Society by their inordinate Pursuit of the *Bestial Pleasures*: Which one Consideration, I think, sufficient to have prevailed with any true Lover of the Public, to have buried such Thoughts as these in perpetual Darkness. For, whatever degree of present Happiness the prosecution of Men's *Lusts* and *Passions* may bring to themselves; it is manifest it tends to the Disturbance, Unhappiness, and Ruine, of *Humane Society*, much more than the Practice of Virtue. And methinks this is a very good Argument, that it cannot be the greatest Happiness even of particular Persons in this Life. To counterbalance these pernicious Effects, I cannot call to mind one single good Effect this *Doctrine* can have. I am sure, the Certainty of a Future State stands in need of no such Supports as this. *Philosophers* of old asserted it, whilst they strenuously maintained, that the Practice of Virtue was infinitely preferable to Vice; even without looking beyond this present state: tho' you are pleased to fix the contrary upon them. And so may *Christians*. For I know not that our *Lord* hath changed the Tendencies of Things; or detracted any thing from the Aimableness, or present

sent Happiness of Virtue. His Resurrection from the Dead; and the Assurances of a future State, which he confirmed by numberless Miracles; added to the Presumptions of Reason; are sufficient to satisfy all who are willing to listen to *Truth*. And if they be not; those Men must be of an odd Composition, who are induced to believe, that *Virtue* shall be rewarded in another Life, because it is not in its own Nature so great an Happiness to Man, in this state, as the Prosecution of the *Bestial* Pleasures: or, because *Beasts*, and *Profligate Sinners*, enjoy more entire and perfect Happiness, in this state, than the most *Virtuous* Men; even supposing them in a state of Prosperity, and outward Quiet. I have heard indeed the Advantages of *Beasts* above Men, in the Enjoyment of *Bodily Pleasures*, insisted on, to make Men ashamed of making such Pleasures their main End; and to make them sensible they are not the Happiness of *Man*, whether there be another Life, or no. I have heard the Sufferings and Afflictions of many good Men here below, made an Argument, that, in another state, all the *Virtuous* shall have the Outward, as well as Inward, Tokens of God's Favour. But I never yet heard, nor ever expected to hear it from a Pulpit, That, supposing no state after this, the *Bestial* Life was truly more happy, and consequently more eligible than the *Virtuous* Life; or, that the Practice of Vice in its own Nature tended to make Men more happy, in all states of this Life, than the Practice of Virtue: And this, under the specious Title of an Argument for a *Future State*! which needs not such Supports; and ought not to be believed upon such Principles, as do so highly reflect upon that *Virtue*, which is the Imitation of the most perfect, and most happy, of all *Beings*.

7. It is extremely unaccountable, that, in proving your *Positions*, you should make use of such

Arguments, as really prove the contrary to what you design ; and effectually over-turn what you are labouring to establish. Thus, for Instance, you represent it as the present Unhappiness of Man, that he is under the Checks of Reason, and Reflexion ; that he hath a Notion of a Superior Good, and an higher End, than the Bestial Pleasures, to which he is ordained ; and Presages of a Future Reckoning : And the contrary, the Happiness of *Beasts* above him. Whereas, all wise Men have hitherto taught, that these were his glorious Privileges, not his Infelicities ; that it is the greatest present Happiness to know God, to understand his Nature, to be guided by Reason and Conscience, to imitate his Moral Perfections ; to live under the Apprehension of a Future State, and of being removed into it ; and to be kept by this means within the Bounds that Reasonable Creatures ought to wish for, and not to lament. This is pleasant in the Practice, as it is agreeable to our most Excellent Part ; and highly delightful in the Review. In the ordinary Course of things, it keeps off a great many Temporal Evils ; and gives the Man that Rational Happiness, which is infinitely beyond the *Brutal*.

As for the *Dread of Death* ; St. Paul himself reckons *them* delivered in great measure from this *Bondage*, who believe a *Future State* : and you suppose Mankind here to be under the Apprehension of a *Future State* ; and yet quote *Him* to prove them in *Bondage* to that *Dread*. Accordingly, we find that many of the best *Heathens* were so far from being made perpetually miserable by the *Dread of Death* ; that they could look upon it with some degree of Satisfaction, merely thro' that Belief *they* had, of a future and better state. And surely, therefore, this is not sufficient to depress the present Happiness of the best of Men below that of *Beasts* ;
much

much less, that of the *best Christians* : whom yet amongst others you undertook to prove more miserable than *Beasts*, supposing no future State : but something might have been thought of, in their Condition, sufficient to counterbalance this single Evil. Nay, I know not whether Mankind would not run themselves into much greater present Evils, and Miseries, were they free from this Apprehension ; than they do, now they are under it. Besides, the Pleasures it most affects, and spoils, are those of the Wicked : who are most terrify'd with this Apprehension. And therefore, if this be of such Weight, in order to prove Men more miserable than *Beasts* in this World : it will help to destroy your *second Position* ; and prove Wicked Men, who are most allarm'd by it, much more miserable than the Good and Virtuous.

Again, You place the Happiness of *Beasts* above Men in this, That in their Fruitions they are carried no farther than Nature directs, and leave off at the point at which Excess would grow troublesome, and hazardous : And under your next Head you esteem it the Unhappiness of *Good Men*, that they govern their Appetites ; and the contrary the Happiness of the *Wicked*. Now, if it be the Unhappiness of Men in general, under your *first Head*, that they procede in Pleasure to troublesome, and hazardous Excesses ; this will prove it the Unhappiness of Wicked Men, under your *second Head*, that they do not govern their Appetites, but go on to great Excess in their Corporeal Enjoyments ; and give a vast Advantage to Good Men above them, who enjoy all the good things of this Life with *Temperance*. But indeed, all that you say in proof of your *first Position*, concerning the present Advantages of the *Beasts* above *Men*, affects only the Case of the *Wicked Part* of Mankind : which only it is that enjoys Bodily Pleasure to Excess ; or that finds any such Torment in the Knowledge
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of God, or in the Apprehension of a Future State, as is sufficient to render any Beings more miserable, than they would be without these. And, the Righteous Man, having no *Torment* from his Conscience, or his Principles, comparable to the *Supports* he hath from them: All this manifestly destroys your *second Position*; and as plainly sets *Him* above the *Wicked Man* in point of present Happiness, as it depresses the *Sinner* below the *Beast*.

Again; You represent it as the unhappiness of *Good Men* in this State above the *Wicked*, that they are obliged by their Religion to be *moderate* in the use of worldly Pleasures; to keep their lower Appetites in due subjection to their Reasoning Powers; to set Bounds to their Desires after Riches, and Honours; and to be *contented* in *whatsoever State* they are: and as the Happiness of wicked Men above them, that they permit themselves to act contrary to the good Man in these Cases. Which is just as if you had argued in other Words, The virtuous Man is obliged by his Religion to be more easy, and happy within, than the *Wicked*: therefore, he is more *unhappy*. What is it, to bound our Desires in this World, with respect to the *Riches* and *Honours* of it; but to be without those Racks and Tortures, which the *covetous* and *ambitious* Men continually feel? And, above all, what is it to be obliged to be *contented*; but to be obliged to be *happy*? Yet, do we here find the poor unhappy good Man condemned, as more miserable than his *Neighbour*; because he is less covetous, less ambitious, and more contented, than *he*. Again, What is it to be obliged to be *humble*, to be meek, to be placable, and easy to forgive; but to be without those Torments, and Uneasinesses, Pride, and Haughtiness, and Revenge, carry along with them? Yet you are pleased to reckon this also part of the good Man's present Unhappiness, that he is humble, and easy to forgive;

give ; *i. e.* that he is good-natured ; not inwardly discomposed, and ruffled ; not carried beyond himself into a thousand Inconveniences by his turbulent Passions. And because this Temper sometimes may incite wicked Men to injure him ; (tho' it oftener melts them into a sort of Goodness, and doth not hinder *him* from any *Self-defense*, or *Legal Redress*;) therefore is he set forth as unhappy ; because he is easy to forgive : and, in the mean while, those innumerable Plagues that are inseparable from the Spirit of *Revenge*, and *Pride* ; and all that Train of temporal Evils, and Deaths, that it is seen to bring along with it, are forgotten, as of no manner of account in this Cause. Neither is there any thing said here, of any importance, but that a good Man will sometimes look singular ; and be abused in Words and Actions by the Wicked. Now this may be, and yet the wicked Wretch, under the Lashes of his own enraged Conscience, and the Terrors of a future Account ; in his unmanly slavery to Sin, and under the Tyranny of *Pride*, and *Revenge*, and *Covetousness*, must be incomparably more unhappy at present, than this Good Man, who doth not measure his Happiness by the Opinion of the *Wicked* ; and finds, at present, more than enough in the regular Practice of Virtue, to counterbalance such an Inconvenience ; much more, in the prospect, and belief of future Rewards, which you suppose him to expect. Nor do I believe the World ever to have been so corrupt since the Flood, but that, in civilized Nations, a Man may sooner be respected and honoured for his Moral Virtues, by the generality of Men, than affronted, and injured on *their* Account : And so, a parallel *Objection* may be drawn from hence, against the Happiness of the *Wicked* Man, that he will be forsaken, neglected, avoided, and condemned, by the *Best* part of Mankind. And then the *Question* is, Whether this doth
not

not counterbalance the Reproaches of the *Wicked*; Or, whether the constant Neglect, and Contempt of Good Men, be more eligible than the Affronts of some of the *Wicked*, which will sometimes be the virtuous Man's Portion.

These are the demonstrative Reasons, upon which you are pleased to declare, not only that Good Men are hinder'd by their Principles from so great an Enjoyment of Pleasure, as *Beasts*, and *Wicked Men*; and exposed by them to greater Unhappineffes, and so, are of all Creatures, in this state, the most miserable: but, in plainer Words, p. 8. That *the impious Man's Joys in this state, do upon the whole exceed those of the Upright*; (tho' in truth you have not been so impartial, as to mention any of the Advantages of the *Upright*;) and that *the Beasts of the Field, which serve not God, and know him not, do here enjoy a more entire and perfect Happiness, than the Lord of this lower Creation, Man himself, made in God's own Image, to acknowledge and adore Him.* Words, which I confess, I am almost ashamed to repeat. Whereas, these very *Reasons*, and what is included in them, are fully sufficient to prove the contrary: that, upon the whole, the Pleasures and Happiness of the *virtuous Man*, do, in the ordinary Course of God's Providence, even in this State, exceed those of the *Wicked*, and of the *Brute*.

8. Give me leave to observe farther, that, tho' you are so favorable to the best of Men, in the second of your *Assertions*, as to profess only to shew that they are *often* the most miserable; you afterwards are pleased to change your Mind, and demonstrate them *always* to be so, and in all states of this Life: taking your main Proof of this, from that Obligation to some particular Practices, from which they are never exempt in any Condition of this Life. Another Method of Procedure which looks very strange, and unaccountable.

9. It is likewise very unaccountable, that you should lay it down at first, and fix it upon the *Apostle*, (p. 1.) That *all other Sorts and Sects of Men would evidently have the advantage of Christians, and a much surer Title to Happiness*, were there no other state but this; and afterwards prove the present Unhappiness of *Good Christians* from such *Topics*, as equally conclude against all the *Philosophical Sects*, which have been of any account in the World. Did not the *Peripaterics*; the *Stoics*; nay, did not *Epicurus* himself teach the Government of our lower *Appetites*; the keeping our *Desires* within Bounds; the *Virtue of Contentment*; a Freedom, and Disengagement from all discomposing *Passions*; in fine, such a Behaviour, as often made their Followers singular, and exposed them to the Affronts of the other Part of the World? And if this be so; what Advantages had these *Sects* over the *Christians*: since they had all those very Unhappineffes, you have seen fit to fix upon the best of *Christians*?

10. Last of all, I cannot but think it very strange, that, after you have summ'd up your Argument, p. 8. you should fix it upon the antient Philosophers, as the best Argument for a Future State, which Mankind had to rest upon, before the Christian Revelation; and affirm, p. 9. That the only sure Foundation of Hope, which the wisest, and most thoughtful Men amongst the Heathen pretended in this Case to have, was, from the Consideration suggested in the Text, as you have explained it; for so to be sure you mean. Whereas, I do not think, you can name one serious Philosopher amongst all the Antients, who ever taught that Man was more miserable in this Life than the Beasts; or that the Best of Men are render'd more miserable than the Wicked, by the Practice of Virtue, as you have explain'd these two Points, p. 5, 6, 7. or that the impious Man's Joys do, upon the whole, exceed those of the Upright: or that the Beasts of the Field, which know
not

not God, enjoy a more entire and perfect Happiness in this state than Man; nay, than the best of Men, in the most quiet and prosperous Course of God's Providence: which are the *Positions* you have undertaken to maintain. Innumerable are the Passages in the Wifest of the *Heathen Philosophers*, which are known absolutely to contradict these *Positions*; and to carry the matter so high the other way, as to make *Virtue* its own Reward in all Circumstances of *Life*; and the most afflicted state of the *Virtuous* Man preferable, at present, to the most prosperous and flourishing Condition of the *Vicious*. How unlikely, therefore, is it, that they should make use of an *Argument* for a *Future State*, the main Parts of which they always rejected as false? And how unaccountable is it, that you should fix this upon *them*, who do so frequently, and zealously, express themselves against such *Positions*?

These are the Considerations, which I could not but think proper to represent to you, upon this Occasion. If you do not think them wholly Frivolous, or beneath your Regard; you will judge it worth your while to review your *Sermon* again. And that you may not reject them wholly, without giving any farther Account of so important a Subject to the World; I solemnly assure you, that this Representation proceeds from no other Principle, but a desire that the Truth may be known in so important a Matter; that the Cause of *Virtue*, which is the Cause of God, may not suffer thro' the Frailty of Men: and that you may have a fair Occasion, either of explaining, and defending, your Sense, so as to rectify the Mistakes, and remove the Prejudices of many serious *Christians*; or of acknowledging your Error, and joining in the Confirmation of the opposite Truth. All, who have any esteem for you, must needs lament that you have
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in this *Sermon* given your Adversaries such an Handle to triumph over you. All who have any Respect for the *Clergy*, must lament that such strange *Doctrine* should be recommended to the World by one of that Body. And all who have any Regard to the Honour of *Christ*, must lament to see it solemnly back'd, and confirmed, by the Authority of one of his *Apostles*.

For my own part ; I have not said what I think it truly deserves : nor could I, if I would. But, I hope, I have said enough to engage you to take a second view of this Subject : And shall only therefore now commend you to the Direction of God's Holy Spirit ; and so bid you, *Farewel*.

F I N I S.

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Holy Spirit; and to his good Blessings.

F I N I S

IV.

A Second LETTER

To the Reverend

Dr. Francis Atterbury,

In Answer to his

Large VINDICATION

Prefix'd to his

VOLUME of SERMONS.

With a POSTSCRIPT relating to his
Doctrine concerning the Power of Cha-
rity to cover Sins.

Written in the Year, 1708.

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SECOND LETTER

T O

Dr. *Francis Atterbury, &c.*

REVEREND SIR,

TH O' I might very well be discourag'd from entertaining any Hopes of having this *Second Trouble* kindly receiv'd, or favorably interpreted, by you: yet the *Subject matter* of it is of that singular Importance, that I cannot help beseeching You, at least to pardon it, in *one*, who again assures You solemnly and seriously, as He hopes to answer for it at the great Day of accounts, that He neither had, nor now hath, any the least evil or uncharitable Design against You, or Your *Reputation*; or any other Aim, but that of defending the *Cause of Virtue*, and of *Christian Morality*, in a Point, in which He could not but judge them to be very sensibly touch'd. If my own Professions can do any thing towards the removal of those Suspicions, You would willingly appear to entertain your self; and labour to infuse into your *Readers*: You may be assured, I am *One*, who do firmly believe the Truth of the *Christian Religion*; and that plain *Revelation* in it of a *Future State*, in which Good Men shall be rewarded, and Wicked punished. But I cannot think it of much importance to any *Argument*,

whether the World know the *Writer*; or not : unless it be, as it often proves, to lay Prejudices in the way of the *Readers*; who, I think, can better judge of the Force of any Reasoning, when it is remov'd, as much as possible, from every thing *Personal*. If *Precedents* can be of any force, to prove that *nameless Writers* may be wholly free from all *evil Designs*; I could appeal to your own *Example*, who began that *Controversy*, in which you have since gained so great a *Reputation*, with a Book destitute of the Name of its *Author*. You were at that time *in the dark*. But, would you have thought it kind, or just and reasonable, if it had then been inferr'd, that You took advantage from thence to attack the *Reputation* of others, without hazarding your own; that there was little of *Goodness* or *Fairness* in that *Conduct*; that you were of the number of those, who have of late taken pleasure to insult Men of great *Abilities* and *Worth*, and to pelt them from their *Coverts* with little *Objections*; that *Nameless Authors* have no right to be considered: that however it might be of some use to examine what such a *Writer* had said, in order by a remarkable instance to shew how little *Credit* is due to *Accusations*, when they come from suspected (that is, *nameless*) *Pens*; and how artfully the *Mask* of *Religion* may be put on, to cover *Designs* which cannot decently be own'd? I say, could you have thought it excusable for any Persons to have treated you thus, merely for Writing without a *Name*? or would you not rather have thought, that all this had proceeded from a *Diffidence* in their Cause? Yet this, and more than this, have You argued, in the *Preface* to your *Sermons* lately publish'd, from the want of a *Name* to what is just what it is, either *with*, or *without*, one. I could mention others, for whom I dare say You have a great *Esteem*; who have written on very important Subjects, and concealed their Names: and whom I dare say You would defend from the imputation of *evil Designs*; tho' charged upon them by

by celebrated *Authors*. But, without alleging this, when you shew me any *one* good reason for it; or prove that the *Cause of Truth* can gain any, the smallest advantage by it; I promise, You shall know who I am: tho' I fear my Name will add but little Glory to your Triumphs. At present, You have manifestly the advantage over me; bringing into the Field all the Reputation and Authority of a celebrated Name, to add weight and strength to your Arguments: and therefore have no cause to complain.

Whether your *Sermon*, which gave occasion to this Debate, were the Production of *Haste*, or *Leisure*; [*Pref. p. 4.*] whether you were transported, in the Management of your *Subject*, with a great warmth and earnestness; [*ib.*] whether the *Doctrine* I have examined were only design'd as an *Introduction* to some *Practical Points*, [*p. 5.*] and this with a particular view to the *Person then to be interr'd*; are Points of very little concern to the matter. The *Doctrine* is equally good, or bad; useful or pernicious; with, or without, any of these Suppositions. And I assure you, once more, it was against your *Doctrine*, not against *You*, that my Concern design'd to shew it self. And pardon me, if I retain still the same opinion concerning it, which I have heretofore express'd: not being able to see any thing in that large *Vindication*, with which you have obliged the World, to induce me to alter it. Much less am I able to see, how my differing from *You*, and pleading against your *Doctrine*, can be any sign of my favouring *Deism*; or how any advantage can come from hence to that *Cause*: which I have, on the contrary, always thought to receive Encouragement from any such *Doctrine*, as takes away from the intrinsic Evidence of the *Christian Religion*, by depressing the tendency of *Virtue*, to the present *Happiness* of Men, below that of *Vice*. It is my Concern, lest Men

of evil Principles should be persuaded by this means into Prejudices against the *Christian Religion*, that first engaged me to give you this trouble, and now obliges me to renew it. And if, amidst all the Attacks of the *Deists* and *Infidels*, at a time when *Infidelity* finds so much Employment of another kind for all those who have a real Concern for the Cause of Religion, [Pref. p. 4.] instead of setting your self entirely against their pernicious Attempts, you can see the necessity, and find time, for Disputes about *Powers* and *Privileges*, and *Adjournments*: methinks You, of all Persons, should be ready to pardon one, who writes seriously about a much more important matter, viz. the Nature and Tendency of *Virtue* and *Vice*; in which the *Christian Religion* is extremely concerned. The Principles I have maintained, I take to be *some of the great Principles of Religion*: [Pref. p. 3.] And these, by your Advice, I now go on to maintain, in order to shew Men the excellent nature of the *Christian System of Morality*: hoping to do this in such a manner, as not to give ground of offense to any Persons. With your Permission, therefore, I will now consider what you have offered, for your own *Vindication*, in the *Preface* to your *Sermons* lately published; and give you my Reasons why I cannot think it Satisfactory: passing by every thing foreign; and easily leaving to your self the glory of that *Wit*, and *Satyr*, with which you have embellished almost every Page of it; and entirely trusting to the naked force of *serious* and *grave* Argument; however displeasing this Method seems to you.

Now, in order to vindicate your self from my *Misrepresentations*, You first inform your Reader, that, (*whatever the Letter Writer, as you love to express your self, affirms to the contrary,*) Your *Doctrine* (about which our Dispute is) *must be understood, and is by You actually propos'd, under the following Restrictions.*

1. *When you prefer Beasts to Men, and bad Men to good, in point of Happiness; it is upon a supposition not only that there is no other Life after this, but that Mankind are persuaded that there is none: [Pref. p. 8, 9.] And upon this occasion you spare not to call in question my Modesty and Truth, for affirming the contrary. Without returning the Complement, it shall be my Business to shew,* 1. *That your Doctrine was not actually proposed, in your Sermon, under this Restriction: and,* 2. *That you do in effect acknowledge as much, in this very Preface; in which you affirm this.*

1. *As to your Sermon; I acknowledge that you sometimes use St. Paul's Words, If in this life only we have hope in Christ. Nor did I ever deny this. But,* 1. *having found, in your own Account, and explanation of your Doctrine, in which you profess to go farther than the Apostle, the manifest Supposition, in so many Words, that Men are under checks from Reason, and Reflexion; feeling inward Reproaches for transgressing the bounds of their Duty; and having uneasy Presages of a future Reckoning, wherein the Pleasures they now taste must (this is your own Word) be accounted for; and may perhaps be outweigh'd by the Pains, which shall then lay hold of them: [p. 370.] Having found, I say, these words, in your own account of your Doctrine, and knowing this to be the case of wicked Men only; I thought I might justly affirm that, in this Argument, you supposed them to be under the apprehensions of a Future State of Punishment. And I may, I think, appeal to your self, if you do not, in this Page, represent this as the Condition in which they ought, even in their greatest *Fleshly Enjoyments*, to be consider'd.* 2. *As to the good Men, whose Unhappinesses you set forth; they are, by your own Description, Men who are obliged, by their Principles, to such and such Virtues; which, you say your self, no one is obliged to, without the belief of a Future State: such as study Christian Perfe-*

tion, in the practice of *Virtue*. And I need only ask you, whether the *best* of *Christians* can possibly be supposed without the belief and hopes of a *Future State*: the suspicion and presages of which, you expressly suppose in the worst of Men.

2. In this *Preface* it self, 1. You acknowledge that the Men you speak of, are represented, in the *Sermon*, as having these *uneasie Presages*. But you are pleased to add the words, *now* and *then*; and to make your *Reader* believe that you spake of them, as only *sometimes scaring themselves with the fears of another Life*. Whereas, let him but turn to the *Sermon*, from whence I was to take your Notion: and he will find you representing this, as the *Condition* in which Mankind is to be considered; (tho' indeed it only belongs to the *wicked* part of them;) and in which you chose to consider them; without being pleased at that time to speak of their being ever *persuaded* that there was no Life after this. If this, therefore, be an *immodest* and *truthless* Representation; it is built entirely on your own Words. 2. In your *Sermon* you represent Mankind as under *checks* from *Reason* and *Reflexion*, in pursuit of *sensual Gratifications*. Now, in your *Preface*, p. 55. you do in so many words affirm, that, *had we no hope of another Life, the restraints of Conscience, in such a State, would no ways check Men in their pursuits: And, p. 56. that a Man's Conscience would be so far from blaming his pursuit of whatever appeared to Him necessary to his present Happiness, that it would approve his pursuit of it; nay, it would blame Him for not pursuing it*. How then can you say, that you suppose Mankind to be persuaded that there is no *Future State*, when you represent them under the *Terrors* of one; and under such checks as, You say your self, they could not have, unless they believed a *Future State*. 3. How inconsistent is your own *Defense*, in this *Preface*? You say, you suppose Mankind *persuaded* that there is no *Fu-*

ture State ; and yet confess, you represent them, as *uneasy* under the *presages* of one : *which* you take to be the case of all who profess to disbelieve a Future State. This may be the case of those who only profess to disbelieve it : but it is impossible, it should be the case of those who are persuaded there is no Future State ; unless it be possible for them to be persuaded, and not persuaded : for they who are really persuaded there is none, not only profess to disbelieve, but do really disbelieve it. This is sufficient to justify my Representation, that you suppose the wicked Men you speak of, to have checks or reproaches of Conscience, and *uneasy presages of a Future State* : Which is a vast disadvantage to their Cause. 4. You say, in your own Vindication, that the Men you speak of, are *such as those* Corinthians against whom St. Paul argued. What the meaning of this *Restriction* can be, I find it hard to judge. For give me leave to put you in mind that, under two Heads, you profess to speak, first of *Mankind* in general ; and afterwards, of the present unhappineffes of the *Best* of Men. Under the *former* of these, you describe the condition of Men enjoying their fleshly and worldly Pleasures, under *inward reproaches* of Conscience, and *the uneasy presages of a Future Reckoning*. Under the *Second*, you set forth the present unhappineffes of the *best* and most *virtuous* of *Christians* : which you fix upon the tendency of their *Virtues*. I desire to know, which of these two Characters come up to the *Corinthians* ; against whom St. Paul argued. It is manifest, He reasoned against *one* particular sort of Men. Were they the *Worst* sort of *Christians*, or the *Best* ? I think they must be either the *one*, or, the *other*. And fix upon which you please ; it is not possible you should speak of such Persons as the *Corinthians*, against whom St. Paul argued : because you speak, upon the same Supposition, under two different Heads, of two sorts of Persons as diametrically

cally opposite, as it is possible they should be. But you say, they are such sort of *Christians* as you represent, (in the Sermon, viz. under your first Head,) as *having the uneasy presages of a Future Reckoning*; and *scaring themselves sometimes with the Fears of another Life*, even while they do not entertain any Hopes of it. Now this cannot possible agree to those *Best of Christians*, whom you speak of, under the *Second Head*. Therefore, if those, against whom St. Paul argued, were the same with *these*; they could not be likewise the same with those *Best of Christians*, of whom you speak under the *Second Head*. Besides, How can these good Men, the very *Best of Christians*, be of the same sort with those *Corinthians*, against whom St. Paul argued? Who surely do not appear to have been, or to have been esteemed by Him, as such. And how then can you say that *the Men* you speak of, are such as those *Corinthians*? 5. In this very *Preface*, (p. 13.) you let us understand that the good Men you speak of, under the *Second Head*, are the *Best of Christians*; who do, upon *Christian Principles*, practice the Gospel-Precepts to *Perfection*; and live a life of *Evangelical Mortification* and *Self-denial*. Very well; Let it be so. Are not these *Best of Christians* render'd thus perfect by that belief of a *Future State* only, which you say your self was clearly reveal'd as something necessary to enable them to be so? Or, shall the *Best of Christians* be supposed without the persuasion of a *Future State*? Or, in your words, *persuaded that there is none*? I should think, these were the *worst of Christians*; and not the *best*. But if you can suppose the very *Best Christians* without the firm persuasion of a *Future State*; then is not the *Revelation* of it necessary, as you in other places contend, and as I do truly think, to render them thus perfect. Let the Reader therefore judge, whether I have deserved the heavy charge you lay upon me; and whether I had not reason to say, that the wicked Men

Men, in your Supposition, are uneasie under the presages of a *Future State* : and that the good Men you speak of, are *good Christians* ; and consequently, such as cannot but have the present support of the *Belief* of a *Future State*, whether in reality there be one or not.

2. *Proceeding* (you say) [*Pref. p. 9.*] upon this Supposition (which I have clearly shewn you did not) you affirm not that the *Best Men* would be always, but often, the most miserable. The Letter-Writer, you say, *dissembles his knowledge of this remarkable Restriction* : and yet, you own, He expressly takes notice of it at last. This Accusation makes me doubt, whether you ever read the *Letter* through ; or no. Since, where I have occasion to mention that *Proposition* of yours, I quote it in your own Words : and that word, *often*, of which you are here so fond, is constantly inserted. Let the *Reader* but turn to the *Letter*, p. 109, 110, 111, 112. He will find the justice of your present *Remark*. These are the places, in which I have occasion to mention your *General Proposition* : and your own Eyes may convince You that, in every one of them, I have remembred the word *often*. That your Arguments, tend to prove your good Man *always* the most miserable, is as true, as that your *general Proposition* affirms them to be only *often* so : Neither of which Points ought to be *dissembled*, or hid from the *Reader*. Nor do you once attempt to prove that your Arguments do not equally prove both. For, supposing that you do put the *Case* of *Persecution* ; (which I shall presently examine :) yet, since you cannot, and do not, deny that You prove the misery of Good Men (above that of Wicked) from their practice of those Virtues, which are their indispensable duty, in Prosperity, as well as in Persecution ; from hence it follows, that it is the result of your Arguments, that they are *always* the most miserable of Men. But indeed, what You call supposing a
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Case of Persecution, is nothing like it : but a proof that the Good Man is *always* exposed to greater Troubles, in this Life, than the *Wicked*. This respects the constant Course of this World ; what always hath been, and always probably will be, the condition of it : Which is vastly different, (You know,) from what we call a *State of Persecution* ; and from such a *State* as I suppose St. Paul to point at. And therefore,

3. Let us examine the third *Restriction*, You now lay down : [*Pref. p. 10.*] and for the denial of which, You go to that height, as to charge your Adversary with being *lost to all sense of Justice, and Truth*. An heavy Charge ! How justly founded, I intreat You to consider. What I say is this, (*Lett. p. 113.*) *These Positions You maintain, without once supposing such a State of Persecution as the Apostle pointed at : but with reference to the most quiet and prosperous condition of this Life.* Now one Question here is, whether, throughout the whole of that Proof which you give of your *Positions*, there be once mentioned the *Case of Persecution*. Consult your *Sermon* your self, from p. 373. to p. 375. in which Pages only You attempt to prove the Good Man *most exposed to the Troubles and Dangers of Life* ; and see if there be any thing, but what respects the ordinary Course of God's Providence : which, You very well know, is always distinguish'd from a *State of Persecution*. I grant that you affirm, that *the Principles of Good Men expose them most to the Troubles and Dangers of this Life*. But this is not what is properly called a *State of Persecution* : nor could you so intend it ; because, in your proof of it, You urge such *Arguments*, as, if they prove any thing, prove the Good Man *always* thus exposed in this *State* ; as will appear. I grant, your first *Proof* of this is taken from the Good Man's being *inflexible in his Duty, tho' sore Evils, and great temporal Inconveniences, should sometimes attend the discharge of it ;*

that

that no prospect of Interest can allure Him, no fear of danger can dismay him : whilst the Hypocrite can fall in with the fashion of a wicked World. Now the fashion of this World is ordinarily and generally such, that sore Evils, and great Temporal Inconveniences may sometimes attend the discharge of what an upright Man accounts his Duty : therefore, it is plain these Words may be used, without supposing any thing more than ordinary in the World ; and not such a State of Persecution, as I affirm St. Paul to have pointed at ; and as Divines generally understand by that Phrase. And that this was your Meaning, is plain from the farther Prosecution of your Argument ; in which, I grant, as you urge in Your Preface, that You represent Good Men as most exposed to Trouble, because they often become a Reproach and a By-word to licentious Tongues. I grant it : but this is not a State of Persecution. This may be true in the most prosperous Times the Church of God ever knew. It is true of our own Times : yet they are not Times of Persecution ; or ever call'd so. I grant again, that You say, Good Men suffer unjust and illegal Encroachments. But, had You told your Reader, by what Means You affirm this comes to pass, He would have seen very clearly that the Case of Persecution was not in Your View. Let him turn to your Sermon [p. 374.] He will find, You make these the Effects of their Humility and Meekness ; Compliance and Condescension : which must be practised by them in the most prosperous Condition, this World can probably know. All this manifestly belongs to the ordinary course of God's Providence ; or results (according to You) from those Duties, which they are obliged to practise in Prosperity, as well as Persecution, and in all Conditions of this World. Lastly, I grant that, in the summing up your Argument, [p. 376.] (and not, as You would make your Reader believe, in the proof of your Positions,) You observe,

serve, that in this Life even the greatest Saints are sometimes made the most remarkable Instances of Suffering. But I answer that neither doth this at all prove that You once argue from what we call a State of Persecution : and that, for this plain reason, Because it hath been true in all Ages in the World, as it is in the present Times, and in this Nation, and in the ordinary course of God's Providence ; (which manifestly is not a State of Persecution, properly so called, but always distinguish'd from it ;) that the greatest Saints are sometimes made the most remarkable instances of Suffering. And now, having examined the Particulars alleged by You upon this Head : whether I was lost to all sense of Justice and Truth, when I affirmed that You maintained your Positions, without once supposing such a State of Persecution as the Apostle pointed at ; I leave to the impartial Reader, nay, to Your self, to determine. This was the first Point here to be considered. The next Question is, whether You do not maintain your Position, with reference to the most quiet and prosperous Condition of this Life. Now, if you use any such Arguments as do prove Men always more miserable than Beasts ; and Good Men always more miserable than the Wicked : then it is certainly true, that You do maintain your Positions, with respect to the Quiet and Prosperous, as well as to the Troublesome and Afflicted, Condition of this Life. And that You do use such Arguments, is as plain as Words can make it. As to the Comparison between Man, and Beasts ; we have under this Head no Dispute, as far as I can see. As to the Unhappiness of Good Men, above the Wicked ; Your Proof is taken, not only from their being most exposed to the Troubles of this Life ; (which You prove amongst other things from their obligation to Humility, Meekness, and Placability, Matters of unalterable obligation in all States and all Times ;) but likewise from their not tasting so freely of the Pleasures of Sense, as

the Wicked. And their Unhappiness, under this Head, You prosecute by observing their obligation to sit loose from these Pleasures; to be moderate in the use of them; to Mortify the Deeds of the Body; to restrain themselves in unforbidden Instances, for fear of Danger or Offense; to have a regard to the Good and Happiness of Society; to bound their Desires and Designs; and to be content in every State; [p. 372, 373.] Is not this one main part of Your Proof? And is it not true, therefore, that You have attempted to prove the Good Man more miserable than the Wicked, by shewing his obligation to these Virtues, and Practices? And is it not true that He is indispensably obliged to these Virtues in the most quiet and prosperous condition of this Life? And doth it not follow from hence, that You have maintained Your Position, with reference to the most quiet and prosperous condition of Life? I never denied, nor thought of denying, that You had spoken of the Troubles of Good Men: but I say again, that You draw Your Arguments from such Points as, if they prove any thing, prove the Good Man more miserable than the Wicked, as well in his Quiet and Prosperity, as in his Troubles: which I have now demonstrated; and therefore humbly hope that it is not in your Power to make the most prejudic'd Person believe that I was lost to all Sense of Justice and Truth, when I affirmed this. Thus much for your Third Restriction.

4. Your Fourth follows thus, *Even when I suppose good Men not to be under a state of Persecution, yet still I suppose them to live in a state of Mortification and Self-denial,* [Pref. p. 11.] The good Men you speak of, You say, p. 13. are the *Best Christians*. So, I assure You, are *They*, of whom I would chuse to be understood: exactly the same You describe in Your Sermon, p. 372, 373. just now cited. This is so far from helping Your Cause, that, in my poor Opinion, it serves to confute it. Whatever undeserved and groundless Insinu-

Insinuations, You are pleased to amuse Your Reader with, under this Head; I, for my part, was ever ready to contend that the *Christian System of Precepts* carried *Morality* to a greater Height and perfection, than *unenlighten'd Reason* ever did, or ever would have done: tho' at the same time nothing is recommended in it, but what is perfectly agreeable to our best and uncorrupted Reason. And I argue, because it carries its sincere Professors to the greatest heights of *Virtue*; therefore, doth it tend more effectually to their present Happiness. You acknowledge, (as far as it relates to those Measures of Duty, which natural Reason, unenlighten'd by Revelation, prescribes,) that *Virtue and Vice* do in their own Natures tend to make Men at present happy, or miserable: but not so, as far as it relates to the measures and degrees settled in the Gospel. [p. 12, 13.] If You will pardon the Words, this is wonderfully strange and unaccountable; that *Temperance, Chastity and Abstinence, Command of Desires and Designs*, in a lower degree, should tend to the present Happiness of Men; and their Natures should be so changed, that, when practised by a *Christian* in an higher degree, they should be turned into his Unhappiness, or diminish his Felicity. *Contentment* is one of those Virtues that You are pleased to Instance in, when you are setting forth the present Infelicities of the Good Man. Tell me, therefore, Doth the greater degree even of *Contentment* it self prove a Man more unhappy, or less happy, than if He were obliged to a lesser degree of *Contentment*? Shall the best of *Christians*, who have their Appetites, their Desires, their Designs, under the strictest Regulations; and their Passions under the greatest Command; be the unhappier for this: or render'd less happy by their *Observance of the Gospel Precepts*, p. 13. in these instances? See, to what a pass you are come; when, rather than Your Reader should not believe I have misre-

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presented You, You will (as I verily think) misrepresent your self. You acknowledge, *You instance in some Virtues common to Heathens with Christians: but you suppose them to be performed by Christians after a more sublime, and excellent manner.* [ib.] Now this, I say, adds to the present Happiness of the Practisers. The more excellent and perfect, in Temperance; Chastity; Command and Regulation of their Passions and Desires; especially, in Contentment; the more happy at present by this Practice. But the best of *Christians* are most excellent in these Virtues, and perform them *after the most sublime and excellent manner.* Therefore is their present Happiness much greater than that of any who perform them after a more imperfect manner, and in a lesser Degree. The Demonstration is plain. The greater degree we have of any thing that tends to Happiness, the happier we must be. But Virtue, (as You acknowledge,) in the degree Heathens practised it, tends to present Happiness. Therefore, much more in that greater degree, and after that more excellent manner, in which the *best Christians* practise it.

But, to shew You to what Shifts and Streights You have reduced your self: You would here make Your Reader believe, 1. That You only maintain that the *best of Christians* are, by the observance of some Gospel Precepts, render'd more miserable; or, which is all one, less happy than they would otherwise be, &c. And that I have misrepresented You when I make You affirm that the *best of Men* are render'd more miserable than the *Wicked*, by the Practice of Virtue. Be Judge Your self. Your own Words in your Sermon are, *The Best of Men*; and *Most miserable*: and Your way of proving Your Position is, by shewing that the Practice of the *Virtues* they are obliged to, is the thing that makes them the *most miserable*. If the *most miserable*; then, *more miserable than the Wicked*. If not more miserable than the *Wicked*; then, not the *most miserable*.

miserable. If the *most miserable* by reason of those Practises they think themselves obliged to ; as You argue : then are they render'd *more miserable than the Wicked by the practice of Virtue.* What can be plainer ? Farther, In the summing up Your Argument, You speak of the *Impious Man's Joys exceeding those of the upright,* [p. 376.] And [p. 373.] You compare your *Good Man* with the *Hypocrite.* From whence it is evident, that Your Design was to compare the *Best of Men,* not only with other *Virtuous Men,* less perfect ; but with the *Wickedest of Men* likewise. Nay, in this Preface, You own, that You prefer *bad Men* to good, in point of present Happiness, [p. 8:] And, [p. 13.] that You compare the Happiness of Good Men and Bad, in this Sermon ; and this by founding Happiness upon *pleasing Sensations :* which sort of Happiness is pursued, in a peculiar manner, by the *Wicked.* And therefore, if your Arguments prove the *Best of Christians* less happy than they themselves would be, were they not govern'd by such strict Rules ; much more, do they prove them more miserable, or less happy, than the *Wicked,* who are least of all tied up by any such Rules. This You seem sensible of, Your self, when You affirm it to be the Consequence of Your Doctrine, [p. 13.] that *they, who are not tied up to the Severities of the Best of Men, would have a manifest Advantage over those who are ;* upon supposition that there were no Future State. What is this, but to own, in so many Words, that the *Best of Men,* who are tied up to the Severities of Christian Virtue, are by that means render'd, at present, *more miserable,* (as Your Words at first were,) or *less happy,* (as You have now changed them,) than the *Wicked,* who are least of all tied up to any such Severities ? And what is this, but in the same Breath to condemn me for fixing a Doctrine upon You ; and to own it Your self ? But your Readers, perhaps, may be led, by so happy a variety of Expression, [p. 52.] to over-

overlook all this. 2. I fear, what You say here may lead many to think, that there is something in *Christian Mortification, and Abstinence*, tending to no better end, at present, than to make Mens lives uneasy. And therefore, I crave leave to observe, that there is nothing of that *Mortification, or Self-denial*, You mention, commanded by *God*, for its own sake: but all, in order to make Men greater Masters of their Appetites and Passions; and consequently, nothing but what tends to exalt their present *Happiness*; as well as their *Virtue*, above that of others; and this to be regulated by *Prudence*, and made consistent with the Health of their Bodies, and all necessary Provision for themselves and their Families. And I cannot but think that the contrary *Doctrine* is false in it self; and layeth an unnecessary Stumbling-block in the way of the Gospel. 3. You would here make Your Reader believe that, in Your Sermon, you speak not of *Virtue*, as practised by the *unenlighten'd Heathen*, which You acknowledge to tend to present Happiness; but, by the *Best of Christians*, [p. 12, 13.] Did not then, the *Heathen Philosophers* plead for sitting loose to the Pleasures of Sense; for being moderate in the use of them; for keeping the Appetites in due subjection to the Reasoning Powers; for Restraint even in innocent Pleasures; for living with the greatest Regard to Society; for being contented with their Station? Are not these the Instances You mention? And are not these Instances of *Heathen Virtue*, as well as of *Christian*? (Tho' the *Christian Religion* gives more powerful Motives towards the most exalted degrees of them.) And shall *Heathen Abstinence, and Command of Appetites, and Restraint in innocent Pleasures, and Contentment*, make Men happy at present; and *Christian Abstinence, and Command of Appetites and Passions*, be of that odd Composition, as to make the Practisers of them at present unhappy? Nay, shall *Christian Contentment* help to make a Man discontented, and

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uneasy;

uneasy : and the more so, the greater degree He is obliged to have of it ? O glorious Privilege of *Christian Virtue* ! But, O unhappy State of the Gospel, if this be true ! I think it high time to remonstrate, when such Doctrines as these are taught. And were I as truly a *Deist*, as You have labour'd to prove me : yet, the *Christian System* of *Moral Virtues* is so divine and noble ; and hath so beneficial and happy a tendency even at present ; that I should endeavour to oppose with Zeal whatever tends to affright or discourage Men from tasting the present Happiness of those who practise it. But now, in one word, to shew You, beyond all contradiction, that You have again misrepresented Your self ; and that You did not in Your Sermon intend to confine Your Discourse to *Christian Morality*, as distinguished from *Heathen* : I entreat You to turn to it, p. 377. where You say in so many Words, that the Argument You have been prosecuting, before that Revelation had enlightned the World, was the very best Argument for a Future State which Mankind had to rest upon : and again, the only sure Foundation of Hope which the wisest and most thoughtful amongst the Heathen pretended in this case to have, &c. and to the same purpose also, in this Preface. What ? Did the Heathens, before Christianity appear'd, argue that the Best Christians were made less happy here by the observance of some Gospel-Rules, &c. and therefore there must be a Future State ? Did they argue that otherwise the Impious Man's Joys must, upon the whole, exceed those of the Upright, i. e. as You contend to have been Your Meaning, of the very Best of Christians ? Did they argue concerning a State of Virtue, which You say they knew nothing of ; and was not in being, in their Days ? If this Absurdity be too gross to be admitted, then it is certain, that You intended what You had before said of Good and Virtuous Men in general ; and not only of the Best of Christians. But if You mean here that the wisest Heathens argued

gued concerning the tendency of Virtue, and the present Unhappiness of the most virtuous amongst themselves, as You have done ; then, how can that be true which You acknowledge, and contend for, in Your *Pref.* p. 12 ? For, if their Virtue, *prescrib'd by unenlightned Reason*, tended to make them happy in this World, (contrary to what You affirm of *Christians*,) as you in this place acknowledge ; then, how can You say that the wisest of them were ever so senseless, as to argue, from their Obligation to several Virtues, to their present Unhappiness ; and so, to the expectation of a *Future State* ; or, to make use of such an Argument as Yours : When, in truth, according to Your own Acknowledgment, they could not but know that the practice of *Virtue*, as far as they were acquainted with it, tended to their *present Happiness*. So that here You have proved, Your self, the truth of what I affirmed : that the *Wise Heathens* could not possibly make use of such an *Argument* as this for a *Future State*. But, why should You chuse rather to take refuge in forgetting, and contradicting, Your self, than be willing to let your Reader think that I have once understood You aright ?

5. To make your proceeding all agreeable, You add, [*Pref.* p. 13, 14.] that you pretend not to compare the Happiness of Men, and Beasts ; Good Men, and Bad, any farther than it results from *Worldly Pleasures, and Advantages* ; and the Objects of Sense that surround us. You know, Sir, that You pretend to prove, upon this Bottom, that the *Impious Man's Joys*, do, upon the whole, exceed those of the Upright ; unless there be another State to come : That the Best of Men are, upon your Supposition, render'd the most miserable in this Life ; by the practice of Abstinence, Temperance, Command of Appetites, Contentment it self, Humility, Meekness, and Placability. This is what, you know, you have undertaken to do ; after

such a manner, as to prove them the most miserable, in all States of Life, as well as in times of Trouble. This I have plainly shewn already. You know, your *Argument* for a *Future State*, signifieth nothing; unless you shew, that the *Case* of the *Virtuous* is, at present, all things consider'd, the most miserable: and you know the method in which you have labour'd to prove this. And now, to make your *Reader* believe, that all You undertake, is, to shew that wicked Men enjoy more sensual, and brutal Pleasures; and are more free to lay hold on all worldly Advantages, than the Best Men; hath something very peculiar in it. Who ever doubted this? But what *Argument* is this, for a *Future State*, as You manage it; unless this be greater Happiness, than what results from the practice of *Virtue*. This you are sensible of, Your self: and, therefore, after You have a little diverted your *Readers* Thoughts with this, You acknowledge that You do likewise say, That pleasing, and painful Sensations, might be esteemed the true measure of Happiness, &c. Might be esteemed, i. e. without doubt, might justly be esteemed. But this is not a proper place, You say, to justify that Supposition; tho', without that Justification, nothing that You have said can be true. Yet You are pleased to say, You look upon it to be a most clear, and indubitable Truth: and You add, This not only might be so esteemed, but would actually be, the true measure of Happiness, and Misery, to the far greater part of Mankind, supposing no Belief of a *Future State*: which yet, I have proved, You did suppose. But what is this to our Purpose? The *Question* is, not, whether the generality of Men would chuse *Virtue* for their Happiness: but, whether they ought not to do so; and whether those few who should chuse it, would not be really the happier for so doing. Nay, were there not one in the World, who should make it his choice; this would not prove, that any

any Virtue could tend to make Creatures miserable; or, that *pleasing, and painful, bodily Sensations*, such as the Beasts are capable of, might justly be esteemed the measure of Happiness and Misery; or, that the not being tied up to the strictest Rules of Virtue, could be greater Happiness to Man, than their being so tied up would be. How wide is it, therefore, from your purpose, to speak of what would actually be, upon your Supposition? You see, the generality of the World actually make *pleasing Sensations, and worldly Advantages*, the measure of Happiness, even under the Gospel; and under the Belief of a *Future State*: Are they therefore truly happier, than those few who do not? *God forbid!* But if You do still think this an *indubitable Truth*; I beg leave to put You in mind of two Things: 1. That you have no reason to be concerned, (as you seem to be, p. 11.) that I make You to maintain, that the *practice of Vice tends to make Men more happy, in all States of this Life, than the practice of Virtue*. For You argue, that the Wicked, by practising Vice, enjoy more, and higher *pleasing Sensations*, than the *Virtuous*, even in their most prosperous Condition, can allow themselves to taste of. And, as for *painful Sensations*; You have labour'd to shew, that the Hypocrite, and Wicked, are more secure from them, than those who practise such Virtues, as, according to You, tend to present Trouble. And these You make, upon your Supposition, the *measures of Happiness, and Misery*. If this Position, as You say, p. 12. cannot be repeated without being abhorred; then, how can *pleasing, and painful Sensations*, (of the former of which You have proved the *Virtuous* Man to have fewer, and of the latter many more, than others,) be the *true measure of Happiness and Misery*? 2. The other thing I would put You in mind of, is, what You seem to have forgotten; tho' contended for, but in the *Pages*

immediately going before : That the *Virtuous Heathens* were made happier by *Virtue*, than the *Vicious Man*. Now, how can this be consistent with what You here say ? Did not the *Moral Philosophy* of the *Wise Heathens* restrain them from such a *Taste* of *Sensual Pleasure*, as the *Vicious* enjoyed ? And if these *pleasing Sensations* be the *measure* of *Happiness*, (supposing no *Future State* ;) then, how could the *virtue* of the *Heathens* tend to their present *Happiness*, upon that Supposition, (as You acknowledge it did :) I say, how can this be, if *pleasing Sensations* (of which sort the *Wicked* of all sorts, You own, have more abundance,) be the *measure* of present *Happiness* ? But You acknowledge, that *Heathen Virtue* did make Men happier, at present, than *Vice* : Therefore, *Pleasing Sensations* cannot be the true *measure* of *Happiness*. Or, if You still say that they are so ; then, must You be obliged to bring *Heathen Virtue* to the level of *Christian* ; and make it equally an *Enemy* to present *Happiness*, supposing no *Future State*.

Thus have I distinctly considered every one of the *five Restrictions*, You have now guarded your *Doctrine* with. Whether they were now first devised to qualify it ; [Pref. p. 16.] or plainly proposed together with it ; and interwoven into the *Body* of your *Reflexions*, in your *Sermon* ; I leave to others to judge. As to the first of them, that You suppose Mankind persuaded that there is no *Future State* ; I have shewn the contrary, by shewing that the *Men* You profess to speak of, in *General*, are such as You represent to be under the uneasy presages of a *Future Reckoning* ; and that the *Good Men* You speak of, are the very best of *Christians*, by your own Confession, i. e. such as could not be what You suppose them to be, without the firm expectation of a *Future State*. As to the *Second* ; I have shewn that, tho' You use the word often in your general Proposition, yet Your Reasonings are such as prove the *Best* of *Men* not only often, but al-

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ways the most miserable. As to the *Third*; I have shewn that none of the *Expressions* You quote, from your *Sermon*, do prove that You once in your *Argument* suppose such a *State of Persecution*, as *St. Paul*, (according to me) points at: and that your main Proof of the *Unhappiness* of *Good Men* is taken from their *Obligation* to such *Virtues* as they are always, and in all conditions of this *Life*, commanded to practise. As to the *Fourth*; I have shewn, from words in your *Sermon*, that You could not intend to make such a *Distinction* between the nature and tendency of *Heathen* and *Christian Virtue*, as You here labour to establish: that such a *Distinction* in the tendency of them, is unconceivable; and that the more exalted, and extraordinary the degree of those *Virtues*, You mention, is, the more effectually, and not the less, must they contribute to present *Felicity*. As to the *Fifth* and *last*; I have shewn that it was your *Design*, (and that, without which your *Argument* signifieth nothing,) to prove the *Happiness* of the *Wicked*, in the whole, greater than that of the *Best* of *Men*, supposing no other *Life* to come: and that You do this by making *Sensual Pleasures*, and what we call *Worldly Advantages*, the greatest *Happiness* of *Man*, upon that Supposition; without considering any of the *Advantages* of the *Virtuous Life*. And, under several of them, I could not avoid shewing how frequently You forget, and contradict, your self, in order to get rid of a present *Difficulty*. These *Restrictions* I have the more largely considered; because what hath been said, under them, will let the *Reader* plainly see the main *Point* about which we debate.

But You are willing, You say, to set aside these *Restrictions*, [Pref. p. 16.] important as they are; and to take your *Doctrine*, as the *Letter-Writer* himself hath represented it: i. e. as briefly contained in your two *Positions*, and the *Notion* on which they are founded. I beg leave
here

here to ask, how it is consistent, for You, in this place, to represent me, as taking your *General Positions* alone, without considering your manner of explaining them: and, p. 51. of this same *Preface*, to accuse me of a very odd way of Proceeding, in pretending to prove your *Doctrine* (contained in these *Positions*) to be false, only by offering some *Observations on your manner of proceeding in the Argument*; and by endeavouring to prove your *Defense of it weak and improper*, p. 52. Is it not manifest then, by your own Confession, that it was not your *General Doctrine*; but your *Explication*, and manner of proving it; that I concerned my self with? And indeed, how should I know what your *Doctrine* is, from general Expressions capable of several ways of *Explication*, but by Your manner of explaining it? Or, how otherwise should I know Your own Sense of Your *General Expressions*? All who will but read the *Letter*, will see that it is not the *General Expressions*, and *Positions*, which engaged me to give You the trouble of it: but Your explaining them in such a manner, as I thought must necessarily bring a Disgrace upon the nature and tendency of Virtue. You do wisely, therefore, to fix all my charge upon Your *General Positions*, and *Notion*; did You not so soon forget Your self, and accuse Me of another manner of Proceeding.

You do wisely, likewise, to make Your Reader believe, that one of my principal Charges was *Novelty*; and so, to amuse Him with an *Heap of Quotations*, out of *Authors* who may seem to Him to agree with You. You know, this was the least of my Concern; and that my principal Heads had nothing of this Charge in them. *Authority*, merely *Human*, is generally the worst Argument in the World; and the want of such Authority, of the least Importance, with me, in such a *Case* as this. And of those four Passages which You have quoted

to introduce Your *Vouchers*, there are but *two*, in which there is any thing like this Charge; and in these, it is only affirmed of my self, and that by the by, that *I never heard the like from the Pulpit*; and that *I know not that the like Assertions were ever maintained by any Person of Virtue and Understanding*; and not that the like were never heard, or read, by others. A piece of *Ignorance*, one would think, easily to be pardoned by *You*; and to be thought consistent with the greatest *Sincerity*: because, (when it is for Your purpose,) *You unwarily boast*, after having quoted Your *Authorities*, that *You have fallen into like Thoughts with those Writers, without knowing what they had written on the Subject*. So that it is not long, since even *You*, with all Your Reading, knew not that these *Writers* had taught the same *Doctrine*. Our *Crime*, therefore, or our *Innocence*, is the same: since *You* here acknowledge, that *You knew not*, before now, that the like *Assertions* had been before maintained by these *Writers*. So that if *You* have produced any, exactly agreeing with Yours; all that will follow from hence is, that *You have now read more Authors, than I had*, when I wrote last: not, that I was in the least mistaken in what I affirmed of my Self: Much less will it follow, that I am, in these *Affirmations*, either *Rash*, or *Base* and *Dishonest*; or, that I leave *You* little room to hope for *Candour*, or *Common Justice*, by laying the foundation of my *Reasonings* in so notorious an *Untruth*. Hard Expressions! which I heartily pardon; and leave to others, to judge of. Doth He lay the foundation of his *Reasonings* in a notorious *Untruth*; as *You* here call the charge of *Novelty*; who mentions it but twice accidentally, and then only with respect to Himself? Whose principal *Heads*, and main *Discourse*, have nothing to do with the *Novelty* of Your *Doctrine*: but are intended to prove it foreign to the *Apostle's* Design; and *false*, and *pernicious*, in it self? Shew me one

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Reasoning; one piece of any Reasoning, I have used, which I founded upon this notorious *Untruth*: or else, acknowledge the Injury You have here done me. And then, for *Untruth*, or *Baseness*, or *Dishonesty*, or even *Rashness* it self; I beg to know, whether it can be either *Rash*, or *Base*, or *Dishonest*, or a notorious *Untruth*, for me to say, of my self, that I never heard, or read, Your *Doctrine*, maintained by any Person of *Virtue* and *Understanding*. Pardon me, Sir, if I tell You, that it is such Language, and such a manner of Writing, in *Divines*, that gives some of the deepest strokes to *Christianity*; and exposeth it most to Men of unstable Principles. Supposing therefore, that all the *Authorities* You here allege, were exactly to Your purpose; I might answer only this, that I never before read these Passages; that You have indeed shewn me something, to prove that some other *Writers* have been of Your mind; and so, might proceed to make good what I chiefly alleged against Your *Doctrine*; that it is not true and just in it self, or agreeable to the *Apostle's* Design in Your *Text*: Which Points do not at all depend upon the agreement, or disagreement, of other *Writers*.

But I will not be so injurious to those *Writers* You mention, as to suppose them, without farther Examination, to maintain that same *Doctrine*, which I have so much blamed in You. Only, before I consider this farther, it is necessary to observe, what any one who reads the *Letter* may see, That the Debate between us was, not, Whether the acquiring and establishing the Habit of *Virtue* be not, in many Cases, attended with great present *Difficulties*, as You would sometimes make your Reader believe; which I never denied; or, whether these *Difficulties* would not, in event, affright the greatest part of Men, if not all Mankind, from acquiring it, were they not

animated with a *Belief* of a State to come: But, whether the *Best of Men*, as Your own repeated Expression is, are render'd the most *miserable*, at present, by the practise of those *Virtues* You mention; whether, in Your own words, the *Foys of the impious do, upon the whole, as to this State, exceed those of the Upright*: Do not, therefore, think to evade the force of what hath been said, by changing the *Question*; or by insinuating to your *Reader*, that what You said was not intended concerning such as have acquired the *Habit of Virtue*. For who are the *Best of Men*, the *Best of Christians*, but such as are, in the most established, and habitual manner, *Virtuous*? Nay, do we ever call any *Virtuous*, or *Upright*; but such as are habitually so? Are not they, whom You represent as denying themselves, upon Principles, the gratifications of Sense, and the laying hold on Worldly Advantages; as contented with their present Condition; as Humble, Meek, and Placable: Are not these, I say, habitually so? If not, how are they the *Best of Men*? or how is Your Position proved? Are not they, in Your own words, *inflexible, and unalterable*; such as *nothing can make remiss in the practice of their Duty*; such as *no prospect of interest can allure, no fear of Danger can dismay*? p. 374. And, if these be not the *habitually Virtuous*; who are? Or, how would You chuse to describe them? Is it not the *habitually Virtuous*, of whom the *Wicked* say, *He is not for our turn, &c.* as You quote from the *Book of Wisdom*? And is it not, from all this, manifest, that our *Debate* is about the *Habitual Practice of Virtue*? Again, it is evident, from the *Letter*, that what I so much complained of, was, not that You say, in General, or *en passant*, that, supposing no Life after this, *Mankind would be more miserable than the Beasts; and the Best of Men often the most miserable*: but, that the way in which You understand these *Positions*, and the manner in which You prove them, doth very much

much reflect upon the *nature* and *tendency* of *Vir-
tue*: That, as I have now again shewn, You suppose
the Wicked Man to be under the uneasy Presages
of a *Future Reckoning*; and Your Good Man to be the
Best of Christians, enjoying the support of the *Belief* of
a *Future State*; that You argue, from the tendency of
those *Virtues*, which He is always obliged to per-
form; that You prove Him miserable from his Ob-
ligation to command his Appetites, to practice
Contentment, Humility, Meekness, Placability,
and the like; that, consequently, You endeavour
to prove that He is *always*, and in all Circumstances,
the most Miserable; and that the Vices of the
Wicked tend in their own Nature to make them
more happy, than the Good Man is made by his *Vir-
tues*, in the ordinary, and most quiet, State of *God's*
Providence. If You will, therefore, pompously and
largely vindicate Your *Doctrine* from the charge of
Novelty; (which was never absolutely fixed upon
it;) You are obliged to produce Men who have as-
serted, and maintained this in Your Sense: For o-
therwise, You know, they can no more be said to a-
gree with You, than I can. Now,

1. I observe, in *General*, that all, whom You have
produced, do manifestly put into their *Supposition*, that
there is in mankind no such thing as the *Belief* of a
Future State; that their *Wicked Man*, when they pre-
fer Him to the *Good* in point of Happiness, must be
understood to be free from all reproaches and checks
of Conscience, and not uneasy under the Presages
of a *Future Reckoning*; and that their *Good Man*
(whom they sometimes post-pone) is not one sup-
ported by the firm expectations of a Reward to
come: Contrary to *You*, whose *Wicked Man* I have
shewn to be, in Your own Words, uneasy under
Checks, and *Presages*, nay, *terrified* and *scared*; and
whose *Good Man* is the *Best of Christians*. This one
difference You can never get over. It is manifest
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in Your Sermon ; It is confess'd, as well as denied, in this very Preface. Take, therefore, the Sentence which You have quoted out of Bishop Wilkins, Pref. p. 28. and the other out of Dr. More, p. 19. which, of all, appear to come nearest to Your Point. And You will find that the former founds what He saith upon this Supposition, *If there be no such thing as Happiness or Misery to be expected hereafter ;* and upon a total disbelief of a *Future State* : and that the Other, with extreme Weakness, founds the present Advantages of the Wicked upon that *variety of Mirth, and Pastime, that Flesh and Blood can entertain it self with, from either Musick, Wine, or Women.* Absolutely contrary, You know, to Your self : who have precluded Mankind from this Plea, under Your first Head, by maintaining as You do, p. 370, 371. that *Reason and Reflexion, by representing perpetually to the mind of Man, the meanness of all sensual Enjoyments, do, in great measure, blunt the edge of his keenest Desires, and pall all his Enjoyments ;* that, in the midst of the *Pleasures He tastes, he hath uneasy Presages of a Future Reckoning ;* that the dread of Death, like the *Hand-writing on the Wall, damps all his Mirth, and Jollity.* Which reasoning of Yours, You must be sensible, will prove the present happiness of the *Best* of Men, superior to that of the *Wicked*, rather than the contrary. So then, You see these two Sentences, (which speak of the tendency of *Vice* to *Happiness*, and are of all the most likely to serve Your purpose,) are not agreeable to Your Sense, in this matter.

2. That these two Writers are, in these passages, perfectly mistaken ; and perfectly inconsistent with Your present notion of Things ; is evident from what You acknowledge in this Preface, p. 12. and p. 57. that, *even in such a State as this, the Virtue taught by Reason tends to Happiness : and that the Pleasures of a mature and confirm'd Habit of Virtue would be justly preferable to those of Vice, &c.* Which, if You would have

have Your Reader believe it to be agreeable to Your *Sermon*, at once destroys all pretense to the *AuthORITY* of these, and others, here cited. But of this more, by and by.

3. These two great Men, when they come to treat professedly of *Virtue*, and *Vice*; and their *Natures*, and *Tendencies*; do absolutely contradict You. Bishop *Wilkins* hath a particular *Book*, in the same *Treatise*, You quote, to shew that the practice of *Virtue* doth *physically* tend to the present Happiness of Mankind: Which methinks might have been taken notice of, as well as one *Sentence* in another part of his Work. Dr. *More*, in his *Ethics*, sufficiently shews the tendency of *Virtue* to the same End: and before his Work puts that *Sentence* of *Tully*, That one day pass'd according to the Precepts of Moral Philosophy, is to be preferr'd before an Immortality spent in Vice. As for the other *Sentence* You quote from Bishop *Wilkins*, [*Pref. p. 21.*] it only affirms, that the natural desire of Immortality, planted in Man, would make him the most miserable of Creatures, under the thought of *Annihilation*; and that *Virtue* likewise must contribute to make Men miserable; not in Your Sense, but, as it would make Men more desirous of an Immortal Life, and more uneasy under the thought of *Annihilation*; as He himself explains it: Which bears no relation to Your *Doctrine*.

4. Archbishop *Tillotson* is likewise cited by You, as agreeing with You, in what I so much blamed. But I have so great a veneration for his Memory, that I cannot let such a Blot as this lie upon it. And therefore, I observe, 1. That the *Passages* You quote from Him, p. 18. concerning the miseries of Mankind above other Creatures, are founded upon a *Supposition* that Men were not supported, and born up, under the *Anxieties* of this Life, with the hopes and expectations of a better: Whereas You, as I have shewn,

shewn, suppose Your *Good Man* to enjoy this Support. 2. All his Proof of this, is founded on the aggravations of the Miseries of Man, (from Thought, and Reflexion,) above those of the lower Animals; not from the *Beasts* enjoyment of *Sensual Pleasure*, to a higher Degree: which likewise makes a great, and visible difference, in Your Sense, and His, supposing the *General Proposition* to be the same. 3. His saying, in general, *What would a Man gain, if the Soul were not Immortal; but to put himself into a worse, and more miserable Condition, than any of the Creatures below him?* doth not shew at all, that He agrees with You, in the Sense, in which You have explained this general way of Speaking. He might place this greater Misery, as Bishop *Wilkins* did, in that greater Keeness, and perpetual Grief, which the Reason of Man would add to the thought of *Anihilation*: which other Creatures would not be sensible of. It is manifest, however, that He doth not place it in what You do, from the Sentence before-cited. 4. As for the other Passages, You quote from Him, p. 25. You have very much altered the appearance of them, by not letting Your Reader know the occasion, and scope, of them; but beginning Your *Quotation* in the middle of a Sentence. For, in his *Sermon*, Vol. 9. p. 48. here cited by You, He is so far from agreeing with You, (whom I have shewn to argue from the tendency of Virtue, in many Instances, to our present unhappiness, in the ordinary and quiet State of God's Providence;) that he allows that Maxim, that *Virtue is a sufficient Reward for it self, to have some truth in it: if we set aside those Sufferings, and Miseries, and Calamities, which Virtue is frequently attended with, in this Life*; that He here speaks of a State of *Virtue attended with great Sufferings*; and, with respect to this only, saith, that the Determination of the *Apostle*, in Your Text, is according to the truth, and nature of Things: as

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You could not but see, when You transcribed this Passage. He doth say, indeed, that, without the hopes of Immortality, *Virtue is but a dead and empty Name*, i. e. would have but little influence, and effect, upon the minds of Men. But then, this is nothing at all to Your purpose; who allow the hopes of Immortality to Your Good Man. Nothing in this, of the tendency of Abstinence, and Temperance, and Conquest of Passions, to Unhappiness; as You have pleaded. Nay, it is manifest that He means it, with respect to support under great Suffering; presently, and in another part of the same Sentence, (which You avoid to set before Your Reader,) letting us know, that He is speaking of *Virtue, as encumbred with Difficulties; and attended with such Sufferings, and Inconveniencies, as are grievous, and intolerable to Humane Nature; and intimating that, in other Cases, it is justly preferable to Vice, in point of present Happiness.* In the other passage, You cite from his 2d Vol. p. 265. his Supposition is, *If we were sure that there were no Life after this: which makes what He saith, very different from You, who represent Your Wicked Man, as very uneasy under the Presages of a Future State; and Your Good Man, as the Best of Christians.* Well, upon this Supposition, He saith, *the wisest thing would be, to enjoy as much of the present Satisfaction, and Contentments, of this World, as We could fairly come at.* This, in my Opinion, might be best compassed by Honesty, Diligence, Justice, Humanity, Conquest of Passion, Temperance, Contentment: contrary, in some Instances, to Your Account of the Happiness of the Wicked. And this, I doubt not, I could prove, from many passages, to have been his Opinion. Nor can the Apostle, in allowing the Reasoning of the Epicure, *Let us eat and drink, for to Morrow we die,* be supposed by Him to allow it to be good Reasoning, *Our Life is confined to this State; therefore, let us eat and drink*
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intemperately: but only, let us enjoy the conveniences, and comforts of Life; and not expose ourselves to grievous Sufferings, without hope of a Reward. With respect to which *Sufferings*, Archbishop Tillotson is in this place speaking; and not implying, in the least, that there is any thing in the Condition of the *Highest Virtue*, excepting these outward Sufferings, which is not justly preferable to *Vice*. 4. This I could prove from numberless passages of his excellent Sermons. The *first* of his *Posthumous Volumes* begins with an admirable Demonstration of the *Temporal, and Present, Advantages of Honesty*, above *Trick*, and *Knavery*. The *Fourth* of the first Volume, published by Himself, sets forth the tendency of *Virtue*, above that of *Vice*, to *present Happiness*; and to the Enjoyment of the Good things of this Life. But it is needless to multiply instances of what every one, who hath ever been conversant in his *Writings*, must have so often met with. He seems to have made it his Business, to oppose the *Notion*, You have explained. And, let any one judge, from what I have now said, and what will follow immediately, with how great Justice You affirm, *That You have the Honour exactly to agree with Archbishop Tillotson, who wrote, and reasoned, You truly say, as justly as any Man of his time.* Too justly, indeed, to bear the Thoughts of any such *Doctrine*, as You have taught.

5. To shew farther, upon how little ground, You can quote *Writers*, as agreeing with You, let the Reader but review what You cite from Mr. Locke, [p. 34.] in which he will find, that, upon supposition of no State after This, no *Prospect* beyond the Grave, *it will be no wonder to find variety and difference in Men's Judgments about present Happiness*: but not the least intimation, but that *They*, who should place it in the Practice of Virtue; in those instances, particularly, which you mention, might justly

be esteemed happier, than such as should place it in *Vice*; and not the most miserable. *Let us enjoy what we delight in*, He saith, *would then be a right Inference*: But he makes the *Virtuous Man's* Delight, and Happiness, at least equal to any. In one word; You might as well have cited his *Discourses* upon *Trade*, or *Money*, as this: for they are equally to Your purpose.

6. If any one will examine the *other great Names* You allege, he will find, either that *They* use only the *general Expressions* You use, without declaring in what sense, and in what respects, they understand them to be true; as the Lord Bishop of *Rocheſter*: or that they make *Beaſts* happier only in regard, *they have leſſer Cares, and fewer Diſappointments*; as Mr. *Glanville*: or that they put the Unhappiness of Man above *Brutes*, upon their being destitute of all Hopes of another Life, to set against their Fears and Miseries in this; as Mr. *Calvin*, Mr. *Pemble*, Dr. *Stradling*; and Dr. *Goodman*, in one of the *Passages* cited. As for the *other Passage*; there is this difference between You, that what *He* advanceth, placeth *Brutes* above *Virtuous Men*, chiefly as to *present Happiness*: And what *You* advance placeth them above *Wicked Men* chiefly; and is inconsistent with what You afterwards say of the Unhappiness of *Good Men*. The same may be said of what Mr. *Pemble*, and Dr. *Stradling*, say of the *Happiness* of *Beaſts*. It is with respect to the *Godly*, and to *Good Chriſtians*, only: which makes a great difference between You. It is plain likewise, that those others, whom You triumphantly cite, as agreeing with You, concerning the present Happiness of the *Wicked* above the *Virtuous*, do not place that Unhappiness in the tendency of those *Virtues* You mention; or do not first suppose Men actually as *virtuous* as possible, and then declare their present condition worse than others, on that account; or do not lay down

down their *Positions* absolutely ; that they do not suppose any such things, as *Checks* and *Restraints* in a course of *Wickedness* ; as Apprehensions of a *superior Good*, to which Man is ordain'd ; as Principles enabling Men to be, what Your *Best of Men* are : but that the contrary is in their Supposition, before they affirm what they do, *viz.* that there is no Suspicion, no Expectation, of any but this present State ; and so, that all Motives of Action, may justly be taken from this State ; or, that the Dictates of Reason, would be different from what they are now ; which You do not suppose in Your *Sermon*. These things make an irreconcilable difference between these *Writers*, and Your Self ; who have supposed Mankind under *Checks* ; under *Pre-faces* of a *Future Reckoning* ; under Apprehensions of being ordain'd to a *greater Good* than any in this State ; and some under the effectual influences of *Christian Principles* : and upon this ground maintained Your Positions. How then can this be said to be an Agreement ? Or, how can You say, that they *make use of the same Instances, and the same Mediums, &c.* [p. 35.] I crave leave, therefore, here to remark, that my Concern was not chiefly about Your *first Position* ; which relates to *Brutes* : but Your *Second*, as You explain it, *viz.* that the best of Christians (who certainly, if any in the World, are the most *virtuous*) are render'd more miserable than others, by Temperance and Abstinence ; by conquering their Passions ; restraining their Appetites ; nay, by being contented with their Condition ; by Humility, Placability, &c. This is the Point, which You know was the occasion of this Debate. This I lay before the *Reader*, in order to compare with Your *Quotations* : and leave Him to judge, whether this be the *Doctrine* of those *Writers*, You have cited. Particularly, I cannot but desire the *Reader* to observe, from hence, with how little

ground You affirm, [p. 2.] that the *worthy* Dean of Canterbury preached the Doctrine, opposed in the Letter, before Her Majesty; and printed it by Her Order. For, in the first place, that *worthy* Person doth not prefer the present Happiness of a *vicious Course*, before that of a *virtuous*; or make the *Best of Men* the most miserable, by the tendency of their Practices. This is the chief Point: and this He toucheth not upon. In the next place, He prefers the *Beasts* before Men, solely with respect to the *Aggravations of Humane Sufferings and Calamities*, considered without the Support of the Belief of a Future State. This Belief he supposeth all Men to be destitute of. And lastly, He doth not speak upon supposition, that Men make the best use possible of Reason and Consideration: as You do under Your *Second Position*. All these shew, that He may differ entirely from Your main Doctrine. And if the Reader finds any of these, whom You have cited, agreeing with You in it; I leave him to conclude, (which is all that can follow,) that there are some *Authors* in the World, and some Passages in *Writers*, which I had not read, before You furnished me with them. But one thing more I must here observe, because You do, in a particular manner, recommend it to my consideration, [p. 32.] and that is, Your Quotation out of Dr. Stradling: of which I have this to say, that He contradicts Your Reasoning in Your *Sermon*; and speaks perfectly agreeably to my *Sentiments*. 1. He contradicts Your *Sermon*, in confessing, that *to live according to the Rules of right Reason, is most agreeable to Humane Nature, and conducing to Happiness in this Life*. If so; then how are the *Best of Men* render'd the *most miserable*, by living according to these Rules? 2. He perfectly agrees with my *Sentiments*, when he questions, whether this *Truth* would, in effect, be sufficient to engage Men to chuse and pursue *Virtue*, without any Hopes of another Life; and affirms, that it cannot

not possibly *subsist in the World, without the Belief of another Life*. I believe so truly : nor have I said one Word to contradict it. But He seems to agree with those *Heathens*, who made *Virtue* a Reward to it self ; at least in many instances. And as for those whom He blames, for *crying up Virtue to the weakning our Belief of a Life to come*, it is plain he means only such, as would leave *Virtue* destitute of such a Support as the Hopes of Immortality ; not such, as do maintain the natural tendency of *Virtue* to *present Happiness* : amongst which He himself is, as well as Your self in this *Preface*. This is all, I have done towards the *ruine of Virtue* : and this He hath done himself, in these very *Quotations*. And therefore, to apply this to me ; as if I had weaken'd the Belief of a Life to come ; which I have at the same time owned, and established, upon the best Arguments ; is like the rest of your Usage. Dr. *Stradling* was too wise, to weaken the *Cause of Virtue*, by maintaining its tendency to *present Unhappiness* : as You do, in Your *Sermon*. This He absolutely contradicts. And, indeed, from what He saith in this place, I should conclude that, had He read Your *Argument* for a *Future State*, as You have managed it, the Reflection He would have made upon it, might have been this: Thus to establish the Belief of a Future State, by crying down *Virtue* ; and making it to tend to *present Unhappiness* ; however, at first blush, it may seem plausible ; tends, in effect, to no better a consequence, than to weaken both the *Cause of Virtue*, and the *Belief of a Future State* ; which cannot subsist upon so false, and deceitful, a Foundation. Not that I can imagine You capable of such a *Design* ; how hardly soever You judge of me.

By this time, I hope, the Reader will be satisfy'd, that I can easily read all Your *Quotations* without blushing : in the first place, because *Novelty* was not part of my main Charge against Your *Doctrine* ;

and, in the next place, because He may see the wide difference between these *Writers*; and Your *Sermon*. Nay, I must not here omit to put him in mind, that, supposing they were perfectly agreeable to Your *Doctrine*, in *that*: yet, You do, in this very *Preface*, [p. 57.] contradict the very Purpose for which You allege these *Writers*; and declare, after all, that, even in such a State as this, the *Habit of Virtue* once *acquir'd*, would afford the *Possessors* of it greater *Satisfaction*, than any the *Wicked*, and *Licentious*, did, or could, enjoy. If, therefore, they agree with You in the *one*; it is impossible they should agree with You in the *other* likewise; unless they contradict themselves: as You seem to have done. For, if this be true; how can the *Best of Christians*, who, if any ever did, certainly have *acquir'd* this *Habit*, be render'd more miserable than others, by their *Virtue*? as You endeavour to prove in Your *Sermon*. If this be true; and acknowledged so to be by *You*; to what purpose is all Your *Large Vindication*? when in this *one Sentence* is contained all that I ever contended for; and all Your own Reasoning, about the *Infelicities* of Good Men, is answered. For, could *You* possibly, by the *Best of Christians*, mean, Persons who had only the lower degrees of *Virtue*; and perform'd only some interrupted Acts of it? Or, could we be supposed, in a Debate about *Virtuous Men*, and in comparing their condition with that of Persons *habitually Vicious*, not to speak of such as are *habitually*, and in a settled manner, *Virtuous*? Again, If this be true; how could the wisest of the *Heathens*, (as You say they did,) make use of Your *Argument* for a *Future State*, drawn, in great part, from the tendency of *Virtue* to present Misery; unless You will suppose, that none of them ever arriv'd at the *Habit of Virtue*? If this be true; then do *You* as effectually ruine the Cause of *Virtue*, by *Virtue* it self; and as truly cry up *Virtue*, to the weakning the Hope of
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Immortality, as the *Letter-Writer* ever did: who never contended for more, than what is expressly, or by just Consequence, contained in this Confession of Yours. Lastly, If this be true; what becomes of Your *Notion* concerning the measure of present Happiness; and of Your *Argument* for a *Future State*, as You explain, and manage it in Your Sermon; viz. The *Best Men*, (who certainly are the *habitually Virtuous*,) are render'd more miserable here, than others, by the practice of the *Virtues* I have so often named; therefore, there must be a *Reward* hereafter? For, if the *Habit of Virtue* affords its Possessors, in this State, greater satisfactions, than any the *Wicked*, and *Licentious*, can enjoy; then, *First*, pleasing, and painful, bodily Sensations, cannot be the measure of Happiness, and Misery, supposing no other State but this: and *Secondly*, There can be no *Argument* for a *Future State* founded upon the tendency of the *Virtue* of the *Best of Men*, to make them miserable at present; because it doth, according to your self, make them the happiest of Men, even in this State. And I shall add, that, upon consideration, it will probably be found, that this could not be true of the *Habit of Virtue*; unless every single *Act of Virtue*, had the same advantage over its contrary *Vice*, with respect to Happiness. Those who have not quite conquered their *Consciences*; and effaced their notices of *Good* and *Evil*; are more miserable in their *Acts of Vice*, than those, who have not entirely conquered their *vicious Inclinations*, are, in their *Acts of Virtue*, and sincere endeavours after such a *Conquest*. Their *Difficulties* are not attended with Reproaches from within: and serve to enhance their Happiness after the *Conquest*. After the *Conquest*, I say: lest You should again be so unreasonable, as to think I meant otherwise, when I said, that the *Difficulty of Virtue* doth not destroy the present Happiness resulting from it, but enhance, and improve it. The Happiness

ness resulting from *Virtue*, can be no other than what results from the Practice of it : and this cannot be, before it is practised, in any Instance, but after. And when it is once practised, the Difficulty of the Practice is over, in that particular Instance. And this, any one might see, must be the meaning of my Words : because they are not capable of any other.

I must here add, likewise, that You have not only contradicted Your *Sermon*, in what You more than once acknowledge, concerning the *Happiness* of an *Habit of Virtue* : but You have likewise found out a way to make the *Good Man* happy, in the beginning of his Course ; and even while He is conquering all the *Reluctancies*, and *Difficulties*, that lie in the way towards that *Habit*, Pref. p. 58. For where once the persuasion of a better State is well fixed, You grant, it will smooth all the roughness of the way that leads to *Happiness* ; and render all the *Conflicts* we maintain with our *Lusts*, and *Passions*, pleasing. Now, having shewn, that by Your *Good Man*, You understood, one fully persuaded of the *Future State* ; you cannot make Him the unhappiest of Men, even supposing Him in a State of *Conflict*, and *Mortification*, (which is the only *Evasion* You have :) because, You say, his *Difficulties* are lost, and swallowed up, in the sweet Hopes of a better State ; and render'd easy, and delightful, even at the time of *Conflict* it self. So that Your *Good Man* is happy, even while He is acquiring the *Habit of Virtue* ; as well as after He hath acquired it. How true this is, I will not now examine : But how well it agrees with Your *Doctrine* in Your *Sermon*, I may leave to the commonest Readers to judge.

I shall not detain You, or the Reader, any longer on this Head, than whilst I set before You two Quotations out of our own *Divines* : with whom, You give Him leave to think, I am somewhat acquainted. The first shall be out of Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons, published in his Life-time, p. 334. Upon due search,
and

and trial it will be found, that true Pleasure is no where to be found, but in the practice of *Virtue*, and *Service of God*. The *Laws of Religion* do not abridge us of any Pleasure, that a wise Man can desire, and safely enjoy; I mean, without a greater evil, and trouble, consequent upon it. You see by this, how exactly You agree about the Nature of *Christian Mortification*. The Pleasure of commanding our Appetites, and governing our Passions, by the Rules of Reason, (which are the *Laws of God*,) is infinitely to be preferred before any sensual Pleasure whatsoever: Because it is the pleasure of *Wisdom*, and *Discretion*; and gives us the satisfaction of having done that which is best, and fittest, for reasonable Creatures to do. Again, Nothing is more certain in Reason, and Experience, than that every inordinate Appetite, and Affection, is a Punishment to it self; and is perpetually crossing its own Pleasure, and defeating its own Satisfaction, by over-shooting the Mark it aims at. For proof of this, He instanceth, in *Intemperance*, and *Revenge*: and affirms the same to be evident in other sensual Excesses. You see here, He chuseth the very Instances, in which You place the present Unhappiness of the *Best of Men*, to prove their present Happiness, above others. From whence it is plain, how widely He differs from Your Sense, concerning the nature, and tendency of *Virtue*: and how widely You err, (p. 35.) when You fix upon this great Man, not only Your Positions, but the same manner of handling them with Yours. That He doth make use, indeed, of the same Instances, and the same Mediums, the Reader will see from hence: But this makes the difference between You, much the more apparent, to find, that by the same Instances, and Mediums, by which You attempt to prove the *Best of Men* the most miserable, with respect to this present State; He endeavours to prove their Happiness. This is the exact agreement with this excellent Writer, of the Honour of which You so much boast. An agreement as exact, and compleat, as that between Your self, and the Writer of the Letter.

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The other *Quotation* shall be taken from the *Learned*, and *Judicious*, Dr. *Gastrell's* Sermons, concerning the *Certainty*, and *Necessity*, of *Religion*. In the first place, I observe, that He justly and wisely founds his *Argument* for a *Future State*, upon the *Extrinsical Evils*, and *Sufferings*, of many *Good Men*: and cautiously endeavours to guard against Your *Notion*, which founds their present *Misery* chiefly upon their being debarr'd, by their *Principles*, from the *Practices* and *Pleasures* of the *Wicked*; and to secure the connexion between *Virtue* and *Happiness*; *Vice* and *Misery*. In the next place, it is very observable, that He, likewise, chuseth some of those very *Instances*, in which You place the present *Unhappiness* of the *Best Men*, in order to prove the contrary, viz. in his own Words, p. 181. That, upon a due Balance of all the usual accidents of Life, 'tis very probable that a Religious Man should enjoy more *Happiness*, while he lives here, than a Person of another Character. He who acts upon a true thorough sense of Religion, hath, with respect to all the external Enjoyments of the World, more contracted Desires, and fewer Wants, than another. In this, He shews the *Best Men* to be the happiest: in this, You place one part of their *Misery*. Again, He is not eager in the pursuit of the necessary Supports, and lesser Conveniences, of Life: and he takes care to avoid all manner of Injury and Offense to others. In this, He wisely places the *Good Man's* present *Happiness*: whilst You place part of his present *Unhappiness* in his not grasping at the Advantages of this World; but bounding his Desires and Designs, &c. Again, The *Good Man* professeth to contribute all He can to the *Happiness* of other Men, without designing any *Worldly Advantage* to himself; upon which account He judgeth He will be more happy, and more secure, than another, who is known to act for himself only. Whereas You, in reckoning up the present Disadvantages of the *Good Man*, mention his living not for himself alone; but having a regard, in all his Actions, to the great

great Community, wherein He is enclosed. You see, what a wide difference there is between these two excellent Writers, and Your self. I recommend their reasonings to Your Consideration : and so proceed to the other parts of Your *Vindication*, in which I am much more concerned, viz. the *Agreeableness* of Your *Doctrine*, to the Design of the *Apostle* in the *Text* ; and the *Truth* of it.

As to the former of these ; before You enter upon Your *Vindication*, according to Your usual Method, You are representing me to Your Reader, as using *Artifice*, and *saying* and *unsaying*, rather than I would miss a small occasion of *cavilling* : When in truth I have carefully represented You, in Your own words. For, as to Your 1st *Position*, about the present Happiness of *Beasts* above Men ; I do lay before the Reader, 1st, That You insinuate it to be agreeable to the *Apostle's* Design ; tho' not expressed in the *Letter* of Your *Text*. 2. That, in explaining Your *Text*, and St. Paul's Concession, as You call it, You make him say, that Good Christians, upon his supposition, are the most abandoned of *Creatures*. 3. That You expressly put into Your *Argument*, as You draw it up Your self, the present Unhappiness of *Man*, in comparison with *Brutes* ; and then call it, in so many words, the *Argument* used by St. Paul in the *Text*. Upon which accounts, I think it fitting, that the Reader should be shewn, that this is neither agreeable to the Design, or *Letter*, of the *Text* : for fear, he might mistake You, as it seems I have done ; and be so weak, as to think, You meant what You said. But, I pray, what *saying*, or *unsaying*, is here on my part ? On *Yours*, indeed, there is : because You have, in words, fixed this *Position* upon the *Apostle*, as truly as You have Your other ; and yet implied that it is not agreeable to the *Letter* of Your *Text*, i. e. not necessarily implied in it ; and consequently, not to be positively fixed upon the *Apostle*. Is not this Account of Your words

words true? Yes. But what need I understand, by *Creatures*, any other besides *Mankind*: since the *Scriptural Use* of the word *Creatures*, doth sometimes determine it to *Rational Creatures* only? It would have been a greater satisfaction, if You had affirmed, that You meant by *Creatures*, only *Mankind*: which You do not once do. For You cannot but know,

1. That the *Scriptural Use* of a *Word* is nothing at all to the common, received, use of it, amongst us: which may be very different. This may be a good reason for interpreting it so, sometimes, in *Scripture-Writers*: but not amongst those, who hardly ever, if ever, use it in that *Sense*.
2. If the *Scripture Use* be of Importance to the interpreting *Scripture-Writers*; then the Common-received use of words must be the ground of Interpretation, where *Writers* speak not professedly in the *phrase* of *Scripture*; but in the common manner. And indeed, the reason why that *Word* is used so, sometimes, in *Scripture*, is, because that *use* of it was likewise received, and common, at that time, as well as the other.
3. In what sense this *Word* is used in *Scripture* it self, must be determined by the *Circumstances*: And the Signification You contend for, appears to belong to such places, (I believe to such places only,) as would be wonderfully absurd, without supposing this to be the Signification. As, *Preach the Gospel to every Creature*, must mean only to every *Rational Creature*; capable of hearing it: because it would be absurd, to the last degree, to suppose any other. But the *Tenor* of your following Discourse is so far from confining the word to this Signification; that it rather inclines to the other. And had there been such a *Sentence* as this, in *Scripture* it self: it could not be proved, that the word was here used in that confined Sense; unless the like absurdity would follow, upon supposing the contrary.

ry. 4. If the peculiar use of this word in *Scripture*, in one Sense, be any reason why I should understand it so, here; the more frequent Use of it, in *Scripture*, in a more large Signification, will be a greater Argument, why I should here understand it, in another Sense: no absurdity, according to You, following upon it; nay, your following Discourse, leading to it. 5. By the same way of arguing, You may make it appear, that You are not understood aright in almost any *Sentence*, You will pitch upon: because there are so many Words used in *Scripture*, in a peculiar Sense; and amongst us commonly understood in another; and that received, and universally embraced; and because it is possible, You might not mean them in the ordinary receiv'd Sense, but in the peculiar Sense, in which they are sometimes used in *Scripture*. But this tends to confound our *Ideas*; and to frustrate the end of Language. You see, Sir, how easy I have found it, to justify my self in this Case.

The other *Question*, I have here to answer, is, why I must needs understand that You call your *Argument*, that great *Argument* for a Future State urged by St. Paul, as including that *Proposition*, relating to the Happiness of Beasts above Men? Why truly, Sir, for no other reason, but because You do, in so many words, your self call it his great *Argument*, as including that *Proposition*. Let the Reader consult your *Sermon*, p. 377. there He will find that You call it his *Argument*; and that You put into it this *Position* as well as the other; and that I could not be just to You, without understanding You so in this Place. If in any other Place, You have said what is inconsistent with this; I cannot help that. All that I observe is, that your *Argument*, summ'd up by your self, and at the same time fixed expressly upon the *Apostle*, is summed up, and fixed expressly upon the *Apostle*, as including this

this *Position* : Which You cannot deny. But You have one very peculiar way of dealing with me : and that is, You labour to fix your own Inconsistencies, upon me ; because I am obliged to take notice of them. And because I acknowledge that You seem'd to *unsay* in one place, what You *say* in another, therefore You call upon the *Reader* to observe my *Artifice* ; and my *Frowardness* ; and my *venturing to say and unsay the same thing* : as if all the *Contradictions* observed in any *Writer*, were to be charged upon the *Observer* ; and not upon the *Writer*. But it is time to come to the Point.

The main thing, as far as relates to what we are now considering, is, whether the *Apostle* meant your *Text* with respect to the *Case* of the *Primitive Christians*, exposed, in the *first Ages*, to the bitterest Persecutions : or, as You have explained it, with respect to the great *Duties*, and that exalted State of *Virtue*, required of them ; and the tendency of this to make them, of all Men, the most miserable, supposing no State after this. This will require but little pains : because You immediately lead me into a way to demonstrate even to your self, that this *latter* could not be the *Apostle's* Intention ; no not so much as one part of it ; and that You give no sufficient proof that He did not confine what He said to a *Case* of *Persecution*.

1. That it could not be the *Apostle's* Intention to affirm *Christians* the most miserable of all Men, with respect to the *Virtues* required of them ; I argue, 1. From your placing this *Unhappiness*, p. 47. in the rigor of those Precepts, by which Christians are obliged to *resist their dearest Appetites, and most natural Inclinations* ; and to undergo a very difficult *Struggle* : Which *Struggle*, in this place, You do indeed, (as was agreeable to your present purpose,) declare cannot be *joyous, but grievous, while it lasts* : and that,

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You say, *is as long, usually, as Life it self, in some degree or other*: From your placing their Unhappiness, I say, in this *Struggle*, and yet so soon forgetting your self, as to acknowledge, p. 57. 58. that this *Struggle*, even whilst it lasts, is made easie and delightful, and the *Difficulties of it lost and swallowed up in the sweet hope of a better State*; the Prospect of which renders all the *Conflicts we maintain with our Lusts and Passions pleasing*. I cannot help the inconsistency of these things. But it is manifest that, supposing You place your Good Christian in a State of perpetual Warfare, Combat, and Conflict: Yet, according to your self, this very State is made happy, easy, pleasant, by the *Hopes* that are in him; by those *Hopes*, which, I have shewn, You suppose to be in Him, when You endeavour to prove Him the most miserable. From hence it appears that St. Paul, according to You, could not place the Unhappiness of Christians, even in the lowest State of Christian Virtue; because there is that in the good Christian You speak of, sufficient to make even *that* a State of present Pleasure, and Happiness. 2. I argue from your own Interpretation of your Text, (Pref. p. 40.) in which You make St. Paul, by the word *We*, to mean the *Corinthians*; *Himself*; and *All who profess to live up to the strict Rules of Christianity, &c.* *We*, that is, *You*, and *I*, and *All*, &c. and from your own Concession, (p. 44.) *That Men of excellent Minds may possibly, by a long Practice of Virtue, have render'd even the Heights and rigours of it delightful; and brought their Duty, and Happiness, to be in every Case consistent, without attending to the Rewards of a Future State.* Now, not to insist upon this unaccurate and hasty Expression: not to ask, whether You do not here make the *Virtue* of some Men its own reward in every Case; and the expectations and belief of a *Future State* unnecessary to these, in all the most hard Circumstances of Life; (which is more than the Letter-Writer himself ever

did towards the ruining *Virtue* by it self, or invalidating your own Argument for a *Future State*;) I say, not to insist upon this; but, to argue with You a little from this, and the other *Concession* You make, [p. 57.] that, even in such a State as this, the *Habit* of *Virtue*, once acquired, would indeed afford the Possessors of it greater satisfaction than any the *Wicked* and *Licentious* did, or could, enjoy; I desire to know, whether there were none amongst the *Corinthians*, who had acquired this *Habit*; whether St. Paul himself was not *Habitually Virtuous*; whether none of all the Professors of *Christianity* were then arrived at the pitch of *Virtue* You describe. Remember that You introduce St. Paul, as saying to the *Corinthians*, You and I, and All *Christians*, are the most miserable of Men, supposing no *Future State*. If therefore, St. Paul means this, as You say, of Himself and all *Christians*; then, neither was He, *Habitually Virtuous*; nor any other Christian at that time. But St. Paul was *Habitually Virtuous*; and so were many other *Christians* of whom He spake this Sentence: Therefore, He could not, according to You, mean this, in the least, with respect to the *Christian System* of *Morality*; because You acknowledge the *Habitually Virtuous*, in this State, to be so far from being the most miserable, that they are, You say, the most happy. It remains, therefore, that He must mean it with respect to some great *Extrinfecal Evils*, or *Persecution*, distinguishing *Christians* at that time from other Men. If herein I have discovered another *inconsistency* in You; I hope You will not call it *frowardness*, or *saying* and *unsaying* on my part. Besides, what You say in your *Sermon* is manifestly intended of the *Habitually Virtuous*; such as are Proof against all *Temptations*; such as do constantly govern their *Appetites*. How therefore can St. Paul in this Sentence consider *Christians*, as You considered them; when You own He could not mean what He said, of such as are *Habitually Virtuous*? Nay, how

how could He possibly mean that the good Man's *obligation to Contentedness* makes him the more miserable ; as You affirm ?

And that he could not intend what He said, with respect to the Moral Virtues of *Himself*, who I suppose practised them in as exalted a pitch as You could wish, is evident from *Ver. 30, 31, 32.* where, when He comes to explain what He only laid down in general, He doth it by appealing to those Sufferings in which He died, as it were, a daily Death ; to his standing in *Jeopardy every hour* ; to his being exposed to *wild Beasts at Ephesus* ; and not by mentioning any thing of those *Moral Duties* required of Him, which He certainly would have done, had He intended his *General Proposition* with relation to *them*, and not to *Sufferings* only. But in explaining it, He appeals only to his *Sufferings* : therefore, I argue, He intended it only with respect to them. As for that expression, in which He is supposed to allow the reasoning of some Men, if the Dead arise not, *Let us eat and drink* : If it means any thing favourable to the *Cause of Vice* ; You must suppose *St. Paul* to say, it is the best way, upon that Supposition, to eat and drink intemperately. But this was against the Doctrine of even *Epicurus* himself ; and too absurd to be here intended : because it is evident that *Intemperance* in *Eating* and *Drinking* doth not consult the happiness of Man in this Life, so much as *Temperance*. But all that the *Apostle* could mean by this, if it be a concession, was this, that, supposing no State after this, it was the wisest way to take care to enjoy the necessities of Life ; and not to profess such a *Religion* as had no reward to come ; and at that time debarr'd him and others often, even from the common necessities of Life. This is the most that can be made of this Expression : which cannot make *pleasing bodily Sensations*, as enjoyed by the Wicked, *the measure of present Happiness* ;

ness; and may very well, and reasonably, be explained, with reference only to those *Persecutions* which hinder'd the *Apostle*, and *others*, at that time, from enjoying even the commonest conveniencies of *Life*. Nay, as You your self explain it, [p. 43.] *Let us please, and gratify our selves with what we like best; and be as easy as we can, in this World;* It debarrs no Man from the making *Virtue* his choice, or from his *Plea* to *Wisdom* and *Happiness* in so doing: And therefore, doth your Cause no Service. Add to this, that, if the Man be so constant, as to come to be possess'd of the *Habit* of *Virtue*; He is, by your self, pronounced the happiest of Men in this State. Therefore, *St. Paul* could mean nothing contrary to this, according to your self: and consequently, nothing to prefer the choice of the *Wicked*, before that of the *Virtuous*, supposing no Resurrection. Add to this, that You contend that *Heathen Virtue* doth tend to present *Happiness*; tho' *Christian* doth not. Therefore, You, of all Men, cannot think, that *St. Paul* could allow the arguings of *vicious Epicureans*, to be good: which You disapprove your self, by preferring *Heathen Virtue*, as to present *Happiness*, before *Heathen Vice*.

Lastly, As for the authority of *Expositors*, interpreting your *Text* as You do: You cannot name one, I dare say, who proves the present Misery of good Men, from their Meekness, their Placability, their Government of their Passions, their Contentment, as You do. And therefore, they do not explain it as You do. You give your Reader leave to think me capable of consulting *English Writers*: And therefore, I take the boldness to tell You, that You have not done well to quote *Mr. Locke*, as expounding your *Text* as You do: because He only uses a general Expression; without so much as attempting to name, particularly, in what it was that *St. Paul* made the misery of *Christians*,

at that time, to consist. Whether the *others* do any more agree with You, I will not judge from hence: but leave to those who please to examine. When it appears they do; I will venture so much at *Greek* and *Latin*, as to undertake to produce as great, and as authentic, and as many names, for the more confined Interpretation: to shew of how little account the *Argument* taken from *Authority* ought to be esteemed. But what I have observed of Mr. *Locke*, shews how exactly, and truly, You speak, when You tell the Reader, [p. 51.] that these *Expositors*, You have quoted, (amongst which is his Name,) *speak very home to the Point*; and do all of them represent the *Apostle's Decision*, as built on the peculiar disadvantage which *Christians* lie under, in point of *Worldly Enjoyments*. I am sorry to find, that You scruple not to speak, openly and positively, what any one, who will turn to his *Exposition*, will find not to be true.

2. You give no sufficient proof, that the *Apostle* did not confine his Assertion, in your *Text*, to those times of bitter Persecution. I find but two *Reasons* You give against this confined Interpretation. 1. That the thing it self is not true; because *Jews* have been as much persecuted as *Christians*. In answer to this, I might urge, 1. That it is not to be supposed, that the *Apostle* intended, by this saying, to affirm, that there never had been any Person, or Persons, in the World, who had experienced the like evils to those, which *He* and *others* were exposed to: but only that *He*, and *others*, were at that time to be reckoned amongst the most miserable of Men, supposing no future Reward. 2. If, at that time, neither the *Jews*, nor any other *Sect* of Men, were under the like, or comparable, Pressures; this is sufficient to justify what the *Apostle* affirms: which, I say, is confined to those days, in which *Chri-*

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stians expected and experienced little besides *Persecution*. 3. You acknowledge, your self, that their *Persecutions* are implied in this Sentence. Now they can be no more implied, than solely intended, according to this reasoning of yours. For the *persecution* of the *Jews*, You say, had been equal to those of *Christians*. As to *Persecution*, therefore, according to You, the *Christians* were but *equally miserable* with the *Jews*: And consequently, what ever proves them *more miserable*, must be something distinct from this, and not implying it: because, what implies this, proving them only *equally miserable*, can go no farther than that; nor have any part in proving them *more miserable*. It is their *Moral Virtue* alone, as to which, You say, they are *more miserable*. Therefore, I say, according to your arguings, their *Persecutions* cannot so much as be implied: because they only put them upon an equality with *others*. But, You say, these *Persecutions* are implied in your *Text*. From whence I again argue, they must be so implied, as what, considered by themselves, are sufficient to prove the greater present misery of *Christians*: otherwise, they are not implied at all. 2. You argue, that the *Corinthians* had not yet experienc'd any *Persecution*: And therefore, St. Paul cannot be supposed solely to intend *that*, in what He affirms. Now, 1. This again will prove, that He could no more imply it, than solely intend it. For if He might imply it, He might likewise intend nothing else. But You own, that He implied it: therefore, He might likewise solely intend it, notwithstanding this Argument. 2. The *Corinthians*, if any of them were good *Christians*, certainly had experienced all the *Persecution* You mention in your *Sermon*: And therefore, if what You speak of there, be truly, as You pretend in this *Preface*, a State of *Persecution*: then, had they already had experience

ence of it. 3. It is remarkable, that *St. Paul* saith, *We*, and not *You*, or the *Best* of *You*, are of all Men the most miserable: Which former is a much more large expression, than the latter; and takes in the whole of *Christians*, considered in the Circumstances they were then in. Had He intended it concerning the Practisers of *Christian Morality*, He might, with more advantage, have pressed his Argument upon the *Corinthians* themselves, by urging the present misery of the most *Virtuous* amongst them, above that of the *wicked World* about them. We see, He urgeth particularly the absurd folly of those, (whoever they were,) who were *baptized for the Dead*; and the folly of Himself, and others, for suffering *Persecution*, upon supposition of no Resurrection to come. And can we think, that He would not have plainly mentioned, nay, particularly insisted upon, the folly of those, who lived up to the best System of Morality; had any such thing been in his mind? But his business was, not to prove the whole Church of the *Corinthians* the most *miserable*, upon the supposition He makes; as *You* intimate: but, *Himself*, and the very best and chief of *Christians*, at that time. 4. It is sufficient, that the State of *Christianity* was such, at that time, that there was no hope for the *Corinthians*, any more than for *others*, to escape grievous *Persecutions*; and that *Christians*, in general, were then in a very calamitous, and suffering Condition: Tho' upon second thoughts, I should rather interpret this verse, of the *Apostles* chiefly, and the *Leaders* of the *Flock* of *Christ*, whose Office suffered them to enjoy but very few, and short, intervals of Rest, and Quiet; as *Grotius*, and others interpret it. Thus *You* see, that your *Reasons* against confining the interpretation of this place, to the *Case* of *Persecution*,

are not at all conclusive: And, at the same time, that St. Paul himself doth not explain this *general Proposition*, any otherwise, than by the *Sufferings*, and *Persecutions*, He, and others were at that time exposed to. If *Authorities* be of any force; as You seem to think them in your own Case: I could add to Grotius, Dr. Hammond; and many others; who confine this Verse to the Case of *Persecution*. But I desire *Reasons*, and not *Authorities*, for any thing of this Nature. And so conclude this Head: leaving it to the Reader to judge, how exactly agreeable to St. Paul's Sense, your interpretation of your Text, is.

I come now to the *Third Head*, The falseness, and perniciousness, of the *Doctrine* taught in your *Sermon*. Here you tell your Reader, that I have put You under no necessity of considering every thing I have said on this Head: because I pretend, to prove your *Doctrine* false, only by offering some *Observations* on your manner of proceeding, in the *Argument* you undertook: as if, You add, *Observations* on your manner of proceeding, would determine the truth, or falshood, of the *Argument* it self. [p. 51.] I put You in mind before, that You taxed me with great unreasonableness, in considering, and opposing, your *General Positions*; without considering those *Restrictions*, and that particular manner, in which You understood, and defended them. What must I do? Can nothing satisfy You? Must I be charged with, and severely blamed for, two *inconsistent Things*? As for taking your *General Positions* by themselves, I have shewn, that I did not do it: but that I made Conscience of understanding them, after the manner in which You understood them; before I pretended to fix any thing upon You, or to argue against You. I could not have been just to You, without considering your
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particular manner of proceeding : otherwise, how I could know what your *Doctrine* was, I cannot tell ; or how I should be able to argue with You. And, as I could not understand your *Doctrine*, without considering the manner in which You explained your Positions : so, neither could I take any more effectual way, to convince You particularly of the falseness, and perniciousness, of it, than the offering to You some Observations upon your manner of proceeding. And tho', from what I have said, it cannot follow, either that your *General Positions* are false, or the Argument built upon them, as others may understand the same *general Words*, which You use : yet, if I have argued aright, this is sufficient to prove to You, that the *Positions*, and *Arguments*, as You understand and explain them, are *false*, and *pernicious*. This was my Design : and the method I have taken, is the only proper method for that end. As for your ingenious Reflexions upon my *Gravity* ; or upon my using the same plain manner of expression upon several Occasions : I confess to You, that I think *Levity*, and *Repartee*, little becoming the *Subject*. If I have expressed my self so, as to be clearly understood ; it is all, I aimed at. The glory of Embellishments, and the beauties of *variety of Expression*, if that be the Contest, I yield to You. Had I designed to have *disparaged* You, as You express your self ; I would have taken another method, not unlike that of some *Modern Precedents*. But my design being only to disprove your *Doctrine*, i. e. your *General Positions*, and *Argument*, as You, (not as others) understand, and explain them : I desire You to name a method, in which I could honestly do this, without considering the particular manner, in which You handle them.

But

But, on a sudden, and in the middle of another debate, You ask, *What tendency hath it towards a discovery of Truth, in this important matter, to spend two pages in proving, that, when I call the Text a Concession of the Apostle's, I speak improperly?* Now, 1. The Business I was then upon, was not the truth of your *Doctrine*; but the *agreeableness* of it to the *Apostle's* design in the *Text*: And certainly, it hath a tendency to shew, that your interpretation was very foreign to the *Apostle's* meaning, to shew, that the *Apostle* is not making a *Concession* to the *Cause of Vice*: as You expressly said, He was. 2. This is of as much Importance, as it is to know the full meaning of this passage of *Scripture*: and therefore, worthy to be remarked. The fortunes of *Greece* do not depend upon it; as You ingeniously observe: but the true interpretation of the place, depended upon it, as far as it was contested between us; which, to a Christian, is of some Importance. 3. You do not well, to magnifie the matter, in order to make your *Reader* think me trifling: For there is but *one Page*, and that consisting not of many words, concerning it. 4. You add, that the expression is not so improper, but that the *Letter-Writer* himself vouchsafes to employ it in the very same Sense, and upon the very same Occasion: which You prove, from his producing your *Explication* of the *Text*, and then adding, *This is in truth a Concession*. And if it be, say You, so also is the *Text* it self, in that Sense, at least, wherein I understand it. It will be hard, I believe, to parallel this way of arguing. I say, that You mistake, when You call the *Text*, a *Concession* of the *Apostle's*: therefore, I may not say, that your *Explication* of it, is in truth a *Concession* of yours. The *Text*, in the Sense You understand it, is indeed a *Concession*. But *St. Paul* is making no *Concession* in it: therefore, You understand it amiss. I acknowledge, You make a very great

great Concession to the Cause of Vice, in the way in which You interpret your Text. May I not, therefore, very consistently say, that the *Apostle* makes no such Concession, as You would put upon him? Yours is a Concession, in truth. The *Apostle's* is no Concession. Is this employing the Expression to the very same Sense, and upon the very same Occasion? I say, it is foreign to the *Apostle's* design, to call his words a Concession, as You do. May I not therefore, own, that your words, not his, are a Concession in truth? Nothing can be using that expression to the same Sense, and on the same Occasion, but my calling the *Apostle's* words a Concession of his: which, you know, I never do. But too much of this, which keeps us from the main Debate.

Of my ten grave Observations, there is but one which You think fit to consider: And of this, only one part, viz. that which concerns the Happiness of a Being, made capable of imitating God in the practice of Virtue; and endowed with Reason. Here are two points to be considered: 1. That the chief Happiness of a Reasonable Creature, must consist in living as Reason directs. This I prove to you by your own Concession, [p. 12.] That Virtue, and Vice, do, in their own natures, tend to make those Men happy, or miserable, who severally practise them, is a Proposition of undoubted, (and, I am sure, by me undisputed,) Truth; as far as it relates to Moral Virtue, or Vice, properly so called: that is, to those measures of Duty, which Natural Reason, unenlightened by Revelation, prescribes. These are your own Words: from whence my Proposition follows; or rather, it is the same in other Words. 2. That the chief Happiness of a Being made capable of imitating God, must consist in that Virtue which is the imitation of God: of what duration soever its Life is. This is, in effect, much the same with the former: And this likewise, I prove to You from your own words, [p. 44.] Men of excellent Minds, may possibly

possibly, by a long practice of *Virtue*, have render'd even the heights and rigours of it delightful; and brought their Duty and Happiness to be, in every Case, (observe the words,) consistent, without attending to the rewards of a Future State. And, [p. 57.] The Habit of *Virtue* once acquired, would afford the Possessors of it greater Satisfaction, than any the Wicked and Licentious did, or could, enjoy. Now then, let us enter, if you please, upon the Debate.

1. You say, My Argument proves too much: even that a Man may be happy under the most grievous Persecutions. 1. This, indeed You have affirmed in words, making the Happiness and Duty of some *Virtuous Men*, in every Case, consistent: which I have not done. On the contrary, I have all along excepted the Case of Persecution; and professed to speak with respect to the general, and ordinary, course of God's Providence. But first remove this Difficulty from these Sentences which I have cited from your self: and then object it to me, if You can. You see, I have quoted from *Archbishop Tillotson*, his Opinion concerning the great happiness of living according to the dictates of Reason: From whence it is evident, that the words You here object from Him, were not designed against such reasoning as mine; but against those who make Duty, and Happiness, in every Case, (which words include even the intense and continued Pains of the Rack,) consistent, without attending to Future Rewards: and whether You, or I, have done this, I leave to your self. 2. In other places, upon supposition of no Future State, You make sensual, or Worldly, Pleasures the chief happiness of Man. I desire to know whether this supposeth a Man may be happy, even upon the Rack. If You except such Cases, when You debate about Happiness; why will You not allow me the same favour? If You say, The *Virtuous* may retain his *Virtue*, and so,

so, according to me, be happy: I answer, *He cannot upon the Rack practise those Virtues, upon which Practise his chief Happiness, in the ordinary course of God's Providence, was founded. He may retain his love to them: and so may a Wicked Man his love to his Vices, which are his chief Happiness; and yet not be happy in such Circumstances.* 3. He may, I grant, practice *Patience and Submission: And tho' a Man cannot properly be said to be an happy Man, who is under intense Torments; yet it may be said, that what small degree of Happiness can be enjoyed results from the support of his former Virtues, and present Patience; and consequently, that this may be called his chief Happiness, even in the worst of Circumstances; as we see it often is in the Case of Good Men under violent bodily Pains.* But 4. When we dispute concerning the happiness of Man, it is evident we suppose Man not only capable of it, as to himself; but in such a condition, in other respects, as is not utterly inconsistent with it. If therefore, the Case you mention, be utterly inconsistent with any degree of Happiness; your arguing affects me, no more than if You should say, *Virtue cannot be a Man's chief Happiness, because it is impossible it should be any Happiness to Him, in a fit of an Apoplexy, or a Lethargy. If it be not inconsistent with all degrees of Happiness; then Virtue may be the chief Happiness in it. For I must observe, that Virtue may be a Man's chief Happiness, in a Case in which the Man cannot properly be called an happy Man.* 2. *Were the being of Man circumscribed to this Life, You deny that his chief Happiness would result from the most excellent part of his Constitution: And you prove it by what only proves that all his Happiness would not. I answer, All his present Happiness doth not, even under*

under the revelation of a *Future State* : Yet, his *chief Happiness* doth. So tho', upon your *Supposition*, the *Body* must be regarded, as well as the *Soul* ; (which I never denied :) yet, notwithstanding this, the *chief Happiness* may result from the *Soul*. What else becomes of your concessions in favour of *Virtue* just now produced ? Nay, who is there, that regards the health and vigour of the *Body*, more truly, than the virtuous Man doth, in the ordinary course of God's Providence ? And again, if both parts must be regarded, in order to present Happiness ; I desire to know how it is possible for You to reconcile this with the making *pleasing Sensations*, as enjoyed by the Wicked, the *measure of present Happiness*. Doth not their prosecution of these, imply in it a total Disobedience to the dictates of the most excellent Part ? Or, may the most *excellent part* in our Constitution be with greater Happiness neglected, than the inferior, and baser Part ? 3. You say, *had we no hope of another Life, the directions of Reason would not be the same as they are now* : and so our *chief Happiness* would not consist in living as Reason directs. 1. I deny the Inference. If the *directions of Reason* would be different, yet still they would be the *directions of Reason* : and so my general expression may be true. 2. This doth not enter into your *Supposition*, as it was explained in your *Sermon* : in which You suppose Mankind under the apprehension of an *End* superior to that of *Sensual Pleasures* ; under *Checks*, and *Restraints* ; and *Reason* guiding them after the same way it doth now ; and *Virtue*, and *Vice*, what they are now. 3. If it would not be the Happiness of Man to follow *Reason* : what becomes of your Concession about the *dictates of Reason* just now cited ; and concerning the happiness of an *Habit of Virtue*, above that of *Vice* ? 4. You argue from the unsuccessfulness of such *Doctrine* as mine, that no one would be influenced

enced by it, &c. I answer, this signifieth nothing. Do not You say the same, in this *Preface*, for all this? Besides, the *Question* between us is not, whether any will be sufficiently moved to the Practice of *Virtue* by such Arguments: But, whether this practice would not be their *Happiness*, were they once established in it. This You agree to. We see that few will be moved, even with the prospect of a *Future State*; or by the happy Rewards of a *Religious Life* at last. But this is because Men will not see their *Happiness*; not because their *Happiness* is misrepresented to them. Besides, I do not make the *Cause* of *Virtue* to rest upon its natural tendency to present Happiness. I know how weak a support this would prove to most Men, against a present violent Temptation. But I would willingly remove, out of the way of it, the contrary Prejudice: which may sometimes hinder Men from being moved to the practice of it, even by the hopes of a great Reward to come. And I think there can be no harm to the *Cause* of *Virtue*, to unite both these Arguments for its support. 5. You do, in one *Sentence*, unsay all that You have been here saying; acknowledging all that I contend for concerning the *Habit* of *Virtue*, or the habitual imitation of God: And so make it unnecessary for me to add any thing farther.

This being all You are pleased to say, in justification of your *Doctrine*: I proceed now to consider, what You urge, by way of freeing it from those evil Consequences which I fixed upon it; at the same time removing the imputation of them from your *self*. Here it is necessary to observe, that I did not fix these bad Consequences upon your *General Positions*; but upon the *Positions*, as You understand and explain them, *i. e.* upon your *Doctrine* maintained under them, *viz.* that the practice of Meekness, Humility, Placability, Contentment: that

that the conquest of our Passions, the governing our Appetites, the bounding our Desires, with respect to this World, included in them greater present *unhappiness* than their contraries. Now You do not say, nor attempt to say, the least word, to shew that those Absurdities, and evil Consequences, do not flow from it: But think it sufficient to mention your *General Positions*; and a good justification of your self, that You use these Positions for a good end; to prove the certainty of a *Future State*. This You call a *short, but full*, answer to all I have said upon this Head, *Lett. p. 116, 117, 118.* to which I cannot but wish the Reader would do You the justice to turn, to see how *fully* You have vindicated your self in this Point. Let any one judge, in the *first* place, of what importance it is to urge, that You designed what You say for the support of the *Belief* of a *Future State*. For, 1. I never doubted the goodness of your Design: but this doth not at all take off, from the falshood, or evil effects of your *Doctrine*. 2. I have observed, before now, that this *Article* of our *Faith* stands not in need of any such supports as this. 3. It is certain that, to support such an *Article* by weak, or false Principles, tends to bring it into doubt, and contempt, amongst Men of weak, or evil Minds: And consequently, that, to shew the falshood of such Principles, and to direct Men to better and more substantial *Arguments*, is of service to the belief, and credit, of the *Article* it self. As, if any Person should pass over the plain Declarations of *Jesus Christ*; and maintain that such or such passages of *Scripture*, which are either *obscure*, or spoken of other Subjects, were the very *best proofs* of the revelation of a *Future State*: I could not but think it a great piece of service to that important *Article*, to shew the weakness of such an *Argument*; there being nothing hardly which more effectually brings

brings a discredit upon any *Article* of Faith, than the using such *Arguments* to prove it, as are weak, and without Foundation. The *End* aimed at, cannot at all justify the *Means* used towards the obtaining it. Secondly, Let any one judge likewise, to what purpose it is to say, that the ill *Consequences*, which I have vainly endeavoured to fasten on your *Doctrine*, are in truth so far from being ill *Consequences* of your *Doctrine*; that they are *Consequences* only of that false *Supposition*, which You advanced in order to disprove it, and by that means to prove the truth of your *Doctrine*. This is a very extraordinary way of arguing indeed: in which you puzzle the understanding of your Reader, by using the word *Doctrine* in two different Senses; and applying it to two different parts of your *Doctrine*; one of which only was charged by me with any evil consequences. I must explain this matter a little, because You have made it so intricate by this way of speaking. The false *Supposition* You make use of, is this, *If there be no Future State*. This false *Supposition* You make use of, in order to prove the truth of your *Doctrine*: i. e. This *Supposition* You make use of, to prove that there is a *Future State*. This is the *Doctrine* aimed at, by the making this false *Supposition*. But you know, this is not the *Doctrine* which I charged with evil *Consequences*. The *Doctrine* about which I was concerned, was this, That, supposing no *Future State*, the *Best Men* are made the most miserable by the practice of those *Virtues* I have so often mentioned; by those *Virtues* which are their Duty in the most quiet, as well as troublesome, state of Life. This is what I charged with *Absurdities*, and evil *Consequences*: which, You now say, are the *Consequences* only of that false *Supposition*. This is the *Question* between us, whether *Humility*, *Placability*, *Conquest of Passions*, *Command of Appetites*, *Contentment*, are to be reckoned amongst the *Evils* of this present Life; and to be accounted greater than those of a *Course* of the

contrary Vices. This *Doctrine* of yours, concerning the present tendency of *Virtue*, as You have explained it, doth not it self depend upon that *false Supposition*: and therefore the Consequences of it cannot. That the *Doctrine* it self doth not, is evident from hence, that, supposing a *Future State*, it is still true, according to your *Sermon*, that, as to this State, the *Joys of the Wicked do upon the whole exceed those of the Upright*; and that the *Best of Christians* are render'd here the *most miserable of Men*, by the practice of the *Virtues* now mentioned. And if this *Doctrine* it self, as delivered by You, do so little depend upon the *false Supposition*; that it is equally true, with it, or without it: It is impossible that the Consequences of this *Doctrine*, should be the Consequences of a *false Supposition* only, upon which the *Doctrine* it self doth not depend. And thus You have given a *full answer* to the *absurd and evil Consequences*, I fixed upon your *Doctrine*, by not so much as naming them, or attempting to answer them; and by amusing your *Reader* with a double use of the same word, in the same Sentence.

Your next way of getting rid of the *ill Consequences* of your own *Doctrine*, is to charge a very bad one upon mine, viz. *That there is no need of a future State to set right the unequal distributions of happiness in this.* This, You say, my *Doctrine* manifestly tends to. My *Doctrine* is in short this, that the *Virtues*, You mention, are so far from contributing to the present misery of the Men who practice them; that they naturally tend to their Happiness. According to this, say You, *there is no need of a Future State, to set right the unequal distributions of Happiness, in this.* Now I. Remember that you have in this *Preface* owned, that *Virtue, taught by Reason, tends to present Happiness*; and that *an Habit of Virtue fills its Possessors, in this Life, with greater pleasures than the most Licentious enjoy*; nay, that the *Duty and present Happiness* of some Men,

Men, are united, in every Case. Doth it follow from hence, that there is no need of a *Future State*? If not, do not so soon forget yourself, as to charge that upon another, who hath not yet said so much as this last. 2. You know there are Men, whose *Happiness* is now as compleat, as all the prosperous circumstances of Life can make it: they are your own words. Doth this, therefore, debar them from any claim to *Future Happiness*? God forbid! Doth it follow that, because *Good Men* are now happy in any respect, therefore, they have nothing to expect hereafter; or that, if a *Virtuous Man* prosper at all in this World, He hath nothing farther to hope for? 3. The *Evils*, and *Miseries*, of the Best of Men, in this State, are sufficiently numerous; without reckoning their *Virtues* among them. They are often grievously afflicted by the Hand of *Providence*; in their *Bodies*, their *Estates*, their *Relations*; and sometimes given up to the fury and torments of *Persecution*. There are many inequalities in the distributions of *Providence*, to be made up in a *Future State*, without adding to the number; or charging the nature of *Virtue* with a tendency to Unhappiness. It is manifest, therefore, that the practice of *Virtue* may tend to *present Happiness*; and yet that, on other accounts, there may be need of a *Future State*, to set right the inequalities of this: And therefore, that this charge of yours is wholly groundless; and void of all foundation.

But, least the Reader should think too favourably of me; and be apt to charge this only upon my *Doctrine*, and not upon any design of mine: You are pleased to add, (I suppose in return to my civility, in carefully avoiding the doing You so great an Injury,) some Instances, in order to prove that the pretended Patron of *Virtue*, as I am called, can hardly, if at all, be freed from the Imputation of an evil Design. As 1. You positively affirm, that I have substituted no other Argument for a *Future State*, in the room of that, which I have endeavoured to weaken. This gives

great suspicion. Now, 1. Supposing I had not; it cannot possibly give any just ground of suspicion, to shew the weakness of any Argument that is built upon a false Foundation, and raised upon the ruins of *Virtue*. To destroy such reasoning as this, shews a desire that the Belief of a Future State should be received upon good grounds; not, that it should not be received at all. 2. It was not my business to settle that Matter; but to shew that your *Reflexions* upon *Virtue* are groundless: which I esteem of great service to the *Christian Religion* it self. 3. The Accusation it self is without foundation. You own that I mention the Argument for a *Future State*, drawn from the *Sufferings of Good Men*. Now, had I had any bad design, I should have shewn the weakness of *that*, as well as of *yours*. But any Person of *Candor*, and *Equity*, would rather have concluded, from what I say, that I esteemed it a good Argument, than the contrary. Again, You acknowledge that I say, that our Lord's *Resurrection*, and his assurances of a *Future State*, which He confirmed by numberless *Miracles*, added to the presumptions of *Reason*, are sufficient to satisfy all that are willing to listen to truth. Yet, you are so candid as to add, that I do not say, of what truth these Arguments will satisfy a Man. Behold the unwillingness You profess to make the worst, and invidious construction of things! [p. 64.] What can the Assurances of a *Future State*, given by our Lord, satisfy us of, but of that very *Future State* which He assured us of; that *Future State*, in which the *Righteous* shall be rewarded, and the *Wicked* punished? How is it possible to put any other interpretation upon the Words? And yet your great *Candor* hath carried You to insinuate, that I might mean some other truth. For instance, I might possibly mean, that the assurances of a *Future State*, given and confirmed to us by our Lord, are sufficient to satisfy us, not of that *Future State* which He assured us of: but that two, and two, make four; or of some other matter, as foreign to the purpose. This I'm sure of; that I could

could mention no greater *Argument* than what I have done, in that Sentence: And that amongst *Christians* no other can be of so great Importance.

2. You affirm, that I am so far from giving an account of the presumptions of Reason for a Future State; that I have all along employed such Reasonings, as, if true, are strong presumptions against a Future State: And this, because I say that the imitation of God, must be the happiness of Man; and that the practice of Virtue, is Happiness it self. Now, in my own words, some *Virtues* only, as Contentment, Peaceableness, &c. are said to be Happiness it self: But this was not so much to your purpose; and so, You have been so kind as to alter them. But take me, as You represent me. 1. You soon forget what You have acknowledged about the *Habit* of Virtue; which is the imitation of God: You forget that You have declared the Duty and Happiness of some *Virtuous* Men, to be the same in every Case. Let me therefore ask, If their Duty be their present Happiness; doth this destroy all hopes of Future? Doth this imply that no addition can be made to it? Doth this imply that a Man without the prospect of another World, is as happy as with it? Or any other of those things, which You have unreasonably laid to the charge of my Doctrine, without remembering that You have said the same thing your self in some places? Alas, Sir, You forget that Virtue may, in the ordinary course of Providence, be the chief Happiness of Man; nay, Happiness itself, in some Instances: and yet it may not be perfect Happiness; it may not be so circumstantiated, as to make him incapable of greater to come. There are degrees in what we call Happiness, all allow: And this World may be a Scene, notwithstanding what I, or You, have said about the Happiness of Virtue, far removed from such Happiness as we may justly seek after, and are made capable of: And therefore, there may be need of Another State, to make up the Deficiencies, and Inequalities

ties of this, notwithstanding, what You say, that the *Duty* and *Happiness* of the most *Virtuous*, is the same; and notwithstanding, what I say, that *Virtue* is the *chief Happiness* of Man, nay, in some Instances, *Happiness* it self. When we call Men happy, on any accounts, in this World, we always are understood to mean, as far as it is possible for them to be so, in such a state as this. Our *Blessed Lord* declares that *Meekness*, and *Humility*, shall bring rest to our Souls; and shall contribute to our present *Happiness*; whatever some teach: Doth it therefore follow, that there remaineth no rest above, for the *Meek*, and *Humble*? St. *Paul* declares that *Godliness* hath the promises of the *Life which now is*: Doth it therefore follow that He might not, consistently with himself, add, *and of the Life which is to come*? *Solomon* saith, the ways of *Religion*, are ways of *Pleasantness*, and all her paths are *Peace*: Doth it therefore follow that all its Reward is here below; and none to be expected above? How justly therefore, do You fix it upon the *Letter*, that, if the *Doctrine* of it be true, this *World* may be our *Home*; a state of *Fruition*, and *Felicity*, not of *Preparation*, and *Trial*, &c. Whereas You may as well say that, because any degree of *Happiness* is enjoyed at present by a *Good Man*; therefore, he hath none to expect hereafter: Nay, You may as well charge this absurdity upon *Solomon*, St. *Paul*, and our *Blessed Lord* himself. That these *Principles* do not tend to subvert the *Belief* of a *Future State*, as You charge them, is evident, because, as I have shewn, the contrary are not in the least necessary towards the establishing that *Belief*; and because these are perfectly consistent with it. But if the *Accusation* be true; You must have the greater share in it your self; because You have gone much farther; and made the *Duty* and present *Happiness* of the most *Virtuous*, the same, in every Case; nay, affirmed that the very *Conflicts*, which Men maintain with their *Lusts*, and *Passions*, in the beginnings of *Virtue*, are
render'd

render'd pleasing by the hopes of a Future Reward; and consequently, that He who hath the hopes of a Future Reward at present, enjoys Pleasure, even in his most difficult combats against Vice; and that they who are arrived to the height of Virtue, have, in every Case, a present Reward. According to your way of arguing, therefore, what necessity do You leave for their future Reward? But indeed, if you can but get rid of a present difficulty; or bring a present discredit upon the Man who is so bold as to argue against You; You seem not at all to regard whether You contradict, and condemn, your self, or no. This appears again from your other Accusation, that, according to my Doctrine, a virtuous Heathen is as happy as a virtuous Christian; a virtuous Man without the prospect of another World, as happy as with it: whereas, according to my Doctrine, the greater degree of Virtue, attained by a Christian, exalts his Happiness above that of others; and, according to your express Affirmation, the Virtue of Heathens tends to present Happiness, which the Christian Virtues diminish; and so, a virtuous Heathen is, by You, made not only as happy, but much more so, than a virtuous Christian. So much do You forget your self, in your zeal. As for the other part of this Accusation; You may as well tax me with teaching that all who are happy, in any Respect, or in any State, whether here or hereafter, are equally so. Whether the Letter-Writer intended by what He hath wrote, to undermine this Belief, is left, You say, to God, and his own Conscience. Not by You, I am sure: for, in the very next Page, this great Candor is forgotten; and You charge me, in effect, with this Wicked, and Impious, Design. For, because I say that I much question, whether there was ever, or can be, a Persecution merely for the sake of the Moral Virtues of any Person: this Doubt of mine, You declare, You cannot account for, but upon this foot, that I foresaw that the persecution of Virtue, as Virtue, must infer a Future Reward; and that, therefore, I must questi-

on the truth of this, merely because I would not have the Belief of a *Future State* admitted. In order to convince me of my *Error*, in matter of fact; You are so kind, as to name me some Instances, in which *Virtue*, as *Virtue*, hath been persecuted. Before I answer to them, I must observe that the Debate here is, not, whether any *Virtuous Persons* have been persecuted; nor, whether they have not incurred the displeasure of some Persons by being so, when this hath stood in the way of their Evil Designs; but, whether the immediate Cause of their *Evil Treatment* hath been declared, and acknowledged, to be taken from their *Moral Virtues*. This is what I questioned: and, supposing me mistaken; is *Ignorance* so unpardonable a Crime with You? But now let us examine the *Instances*, You produce. Were not, say You, Socrates, and Aristides, plain Instances of this kind? Not at all. Socrates was persecuted, not under the notion of a *Virtuous Man*: but as an *Impious Contemner* of the Gods of his Country. Aristides was not condemned to *Banishment*, as a *Virtuous Man*: But by Themistocles's Artifice, who wanted him out of the way, He was painted out in false, and not in his own true, Colours. The *Historian* tells us, that the answer of one of his *Ignorant Condemners*, who was asked by Aristides himself, why he was against him, was this, that He did not know Aristides; but that He did not like a Man that had endeavoured to appropriate to himself the Title of *Just*. By which, it appears, that this Man had been set against Him, not as a truly *Just* Man; but as one who had only pretended to be so, and vainly affected to be so surnamed, and distinguished from others: And that the Cause of his Persecution, publicly pretended by Themistocles, was not his *Virtue*; the reality of which was without doubt denied, or dissembled, by his Adversaries, whose *Eloquence* it was, that gave such a representation of Him, as to move the Multitude against Him. Again, You ask, when Joseph suffered

suffered under the Accusation of Potiphar's Wife, was He not persecuted merely for the sake of Moral Virtue? I answer, No: quite the contrary. He was punished, as a Person who had attempted her Chastity: And had not been punished, had He not been represented by her as a Vicious Man. So that *Virtue*, as *Virtue*, was not punished, in any of these Instances: which all help to confirm the truth of what I intended, that the Cause of *Virtue* hath had such a Reputation in the World, that, when any Wicked Persons have a design of bringing any Punishment, or Persecution, upon the *Virtuous*, their business is, first to paint them out in black Colours; to hide their *Virtues*; and to represent them, as *Vicious* in some respect or other, before they can hope to compass their End. This, any one may see, was my meaning; and this, to be sure, You must take to be my meaning: otherwise, You might as well have produced our Saviour, and all his suffering Disciples, as contradictions to what I maintained. Upon this Head, I must observe to You, that I hold it to be a sufficient ground for the expectation of Happiness to come, that *Virtuous* Men are so frequently persecuted, and miserable, here; tho' I deny them to be persecuted under the notion of *Virtuous* Men; or to be made miserable by the tendency of their *Virtues*.

But should *Virtue* be persecuted, Tet still (You say) I deny, the hopes of a distant Recompence would afford it any immediate Relief. The Reader will here have a fresh Instance of your great unwillingness to make the worst, and most invidious, construction of Things. My Words, on which You ground this Charge, are these, That the best of Men are sometimes, in this State, the most miserable, as far as the Evils of this World can make them so; may possibly be true: but it is equally true, whether You suppose a Future State; or suppose it not. Of this, You say, You can make no other Sense, than

than that *Virtuous Persons*, so persecuted, are equally miserable under both *Suppositions*; their hopes of future Happiness being no manner of allay to their present Miseries. Now this is so far from being the only Sense, of which they are capable; that they are not at all capable of it. Nor is it possible for You, with all your Wit, to make them capable of it. On the contrary, they do imply that the present support, under their misery, arising from their Hopes, is the same; whether in reality there be such a State, or no. It is not said, they are equally miserable at present; whether they have hopes of a Future State, or no. This was far from my thoughts: but, whether, in reality, at last, such a State shall be found, or not. These are two very different things, between which I have carefully distinguished: as You ought to have done, And therefore to fly out, as You here do, upon a mistake, and inadvertence of your own, will make your *Accusations* sit much the lighter for the future; and only redound to your own Disadvantage: who, with all your Abilities, and all your Critical severity upon others, know no other Sense of a plain Sentence, than one, of which it is utterly incapable.

Agreeable to this, is your Charge, that, by removing such supports, as the Argument You make use of in your Sermon, I take away the strongest inducement the best Philosophers ever had to believe a Future State: and then leave You to depend upon the bare assertions of other Philosophers; on their authority, without Reason, for the truth of it. Now, 1. You have not, tho' I called You to it before, named any one Philosopher, who ever believed a Future State upon what You call the strongest Inducement; the tendency of those Virtues You mention, to present misery. Nor can You produce one. Nay, 2. How can you pretend to do it? when You own that their Virtue, as taught by Reason, tended to present Happiness; (which They must know, as well as You;) and that what You speak
to

to the contrary, is only with relation to *Christian Virtue*, of which they knew nothing. 3. My business was not to produce their *Reasonings*: but my referring to the *Philosophers*, is so far from leaving Persons to believe on their *Authority*; that it is the advising them to read, and examine, their *Reasonings*. 4. Not content with this, I expressly mention the great demonstration of a *Future State*, by the *Gospel*: Which, I think, is the best thing I could do.

Thus have I followed You very closely: and considered every thing, in Your *large Vindication*, which hath the face of Reasoning, and *Argument*. I shall here add, that I hope the *Reader* will be so just as to turn to the *Letter* it self; to see how compleat and full an answer You have made to it. So, He will the better judge, whether, of *Ten Observations*, One only deserves to be touched upon; and all the rest to be answered by the wonderful *virtue* of one single Word; and by the allegation of so unpardonable a Crime as writing *gravely* on so serious an *Argument*: whether the *Contradictions* which I mentioned, in order to convince You of Your *Error*, did not deserve to be mentioned and considered: whether the *Wise Philosophers* who, You say, made use of Your *Argument* for a *Future State*, should not have been produced by You; and the like, which I now leave to the judgment of others.

Why You were singled out, as You express it, from the crowd of *Writers*, who have all along maintained the same *Doctrine*, may very well be accounted for, without Your supposition of *Insincerity*, or *Malice*, in the *Letter-Writer*. For, 1. By the same *Argument*, every Writer must be *Insincere*, and *Malicious*, who endeavours to shew that any other *Writer* hath been mistaken; if that other *Writer* can but shew that He followed the footsteps of any who wrote before Him: And I fear, Your self must come under the *Imputation*; as well as the greatest *Writers* in
our

cur Church. The Man, against whom Mr *Chillingworth* wrote, might as well ask, *Why He was singled out of the crowd of Writers, who had said the same things: &c?* 2. Supposing this *Crowd of Writers* to have taught Your *Doctrine*; there is the more need of openly declaring against it, if it be false: And, *You* having taught it, in a very particular and open manner, it cannot be any more criminal to single out *You*, than to single out any of them, in order to shew the falshood of it. The last *Writer*, if He be a Person of any Note, commonly makes the greatest Impression: And I think it no little Complement to *You*, that I feared Your Name might add weight, where it is wanting in *Argument*; and help to propagate, what I judged to be of pernicious Consequence. But, 3. I have shewn that there is no such *Crowd of Writers* before *You*, in this *Cause*, as *You* would make the *Reader* believe. 4. If I were so ignorant, or forgetful, as to think that these *Writers* had not taught any thing like *Your Doctrine*, this is a sufficient justification of my saying so; which *You* seem to think a *manifest indication of my Insincerity, and Malice*: Not remembering that *You* confess, that, when *You* taught this *Doctrine*, *Your* self laboured under the same *Ignorance*, or want of Memory. As for any *Evil Design* against *You*; *God knows*, I had none: And I think it manifest to any *Reader*, from my manner of Writing. *You* have not attempted to produce one *Personal Reflexion*; unless *You* be resolved to call that *Personal*, which only concerns *Your* manner of handling *Your* Argument. So far from any other *Personal Design*; that, if I have unwarily drop'd any one unnecessary Expression which looks another way, I am ready sincerely, and heartily, to beg pardon for it.

But indeed, *Your* manner of *Writing*, in this Controversy, hath something so very peculiar in it;

it; that I cannot help, in my own necessary Defense, laying before the Reader some of those many Absurdities, and Contradictions, into which Your zeal against the *Letter-Writer* seems to have carried You. In the *first* place, Mankind is supposed by You, in Your Argument, *persuaded* that there is no Future State; and yet scared, and terrified, with the apprehensions of one; [p. 8.] in a condition, in which the *restraints of Conscience* would no ways check Men in their pursuits; nay, in which it would blame Men for not pursuing Sensual Pleasure, if they judge it necessary to their present Happiness, [p. 55, 56.] yet, in Your Sermon, Mankind are represented, upon Your Supposition, as under Checks from Reason, and Reflexion, representing the meanness of all Sensual Enjoyments, &c. as under inward Reproaches, &c. [p. 370.] and Your Good Man to be such an one, as, You say, He could not be without the hopes of a Future State. Again, The *Virtue*, taught by Reason, tends to present Happiness: but *Christian Virtue* doth not; tho' acknowledged to differ, in many Instances, only in degree; which must add to the Happiness of it. *Heathen Virtue* tended to present Happiness: yet the *Wiseest Heathens* made use of Your Argument, taken from the present Unhappiness of a *Virtuous Life*, to prove a Future State. What You say of these Unhappinesses, You declare in Your Preface, is only with respect to *Christian Virtues*: Yet, in Your Sermon, the Argument drawn from them is declared to be the very best Argument used by the *Heathens* before the *Christian Revelation*; i. e. before there was any such thing as *Christian Virtue* in the World. The best of Men, the best of *Christians*, are made miserable by those *Virtues* mentioned in Your Sermon: Yet, there are Men, arrived to such a pitch in *Virtue*, as that their Duty, and present Happiness, are the same in every case; yet, the *Habit of Virtue* fills its possessors with greater present Pleasures, than any, the most Licen-
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tious can enjoy. Again, The habitually *Virtuous* are happier, at present, than the *Vicious*: Yet, the *Letter-Writer* is a *Deist*, an *Underminer* of one of the greatest Articles of *Christian Faith*, for contending for no more than this: and the *Cause*, prosecuted by *Him*, called the *Cause of Infidelity*, because *He* would not have such an *Article* built upon a *Falsbood*, which may be pernicious to the *Cause of Virtue*. You tax me, [p. 4.] with *falsly representing You*, 1. In speaking, as if You had undertaken to *demonstrate the Truth*, You supposed to be contained in Your *Text*: Whereas, You affirm, [p. 5.] that your *declared Intention* was only to *shew the undoubted truth* of the *Argument* contained in it, i. e. in other words, to *demonstrate it*. Thus the *Mathematicians* are misrepresented, when they are said to undertake to *demonstrate the truth* of their *Propositions*: whereas their *declared Intention* is only to *shew the undoubted truth* of them. 2. I *Falsly represent You* in speaking, as if You had undertaken to *state the Point*, i. e. on which part the greatest *Happiness* lies; as it immediately follows; whether on the side of the *Virtuous*, or *Vicious Life*: Whereas, it is manifest from Your *Sermon*, that You only undertake to *shew*, that it lies, as to this *Life*, on the side of the *latter*. But can this possibly be undertaken, without implying the other? Or, can this be shewn, by considering nothing but the *Advantages on one side*; and nothing but the supposed *Disadvantages on the other*? Or, can it be proved that the *Advantage* lies on one side, without proving that the *Advantages on the other side* are not comparable? And if You had not *time* to mention all the present *Advantages*, on the side of *Virtue*; yet, methinks, You might, in *general*, have intimated, at least, that there were some. Again, You blame the *Letter-Writer* for considering only Your *General Propositions*, without regarding the *particular manner* in which You understand them, [p. 16.] Yet, [p. 51.]

[p. 51.] You are scoffing at him, for being so weak as to attack Your *Doctrine*, by considering Your manner of proceeding in it; i. e. by considering the particular manner, in which You understand, and maintain, it. You will leave my Design to God, and my own Conscience, [p. 62.] yet, at the very beginning You declare the end of Your Writing to be, that Men may see how artfully the Mask of Religion can sometimes be put on, to cover Designs which cannot decently be owned; and [p. 63.] You insinuate, that it is impossible to account for some things, but by supposing Me to have written, with a design against the Belief of a Future State. This may suffice to shew how Zeal, and an impatience of being opposed, may hurry Men of bright Parts, and Abilities, into Absurdities, and apparent Contradictions.

As for the uncharitable Usage I have met with from You, without the least ground, unless for being of a different Opinion, and representing this difference to You, seriously, and gravely; I pray God not to lay it to Your Charge. My Civility You have returned, by supposing the worst that can be supposed of me: by charging me, not with involuntary Mistakes; but Wicked, and Impious Designs. The Cause I maintain, is the Cause of Infidelity. Deist, Egyptian, Rash, Insincere, Malicious, Base, Dishonest, Ignorant, and the like, are the Christian Complements, which, with an happy variety of Expression, You pass upon one, who acted a very different part towards You: and who now forgives You; well knowing that all the Provocations You can offer, cannot justify, what they well deserve, the return of the like, from a Christian. I know not what effect the foregoing pages may have upon You. Perhaps You may despise them. Perhaps You may answer them, by proving the Writer an Atheist; or something worse than a Deist now: Which if he were; his Arguments are still the same; and, if seriously proposed,

fed, not beneath the consideration of a *Christian Divine*, or unworthy of his serious, and charitable Reply. Whatever the event be; be assured that, as, on *one* hand, I will let slip no just opportunity of defending the *Cause of Virtue*; which I have undertaken: so, on the *other*, no ill usage of Yours, shall rob me, either of the *present Pleasure*, or *future Reward*, of a forgiving Temper. But, for God's sake, if You will permit *me* to advise, consider, if you think fit to defend Your *Cause* again, that *Truth* is uniform; and in nothing *Self-contradicting*. Consider the conclusion of Your own *Preface*: and think whether any thing can give the *Common Enemies of Religion* a greater Advantage, than to see such returns made, by a *Christian Divine*, to what He acknowledges to be *seriously*, and *gravely*, proposed; and in which He cannot complain of one *abusive*, or *uncivil*, Expression. Permit me to apply my self to You, in some of Your own Words. *These* are such *manifest Contradictions* to the *Spirit of Christianity*, as all Your following solemn *Pretenses of Concern* for the foundations of it, cannot cover, or elude, [p. 65.] and carry in them a *Reflexion*, so much to the disadvantage of *Religion*, that, could they possibly be concealed, I should think my self obliged to pass them over in Silence. How must it afflict good Men, to see such Replies made, and in such a manner, as even to make sport for Unbelievers? Are these the *Blessed Effects of Zeal*, and Concern for the great Truths of *Religion*; of which we hear so much in some Men's Writings? How long shall the best words in the World, be thus perversely applied to the worst Purposes, &c. [p. 68.] These are what will lie heavy upon a *Christian*, in another World: as, in this, they expose *Religion* it self, to the *Laughter*, and *Scorn*, of profane Men, who shoot out the Lip, and shake the Head, saying, Aha, so we would have it: [Pref. p. 69.] and, I fear, do more harm to the *Cause of Christianity*, amongst Men of unsettled Minds,

Minds, than all the *Speculative Arguments*, managed by the same Persons, can make amends for. Your large *Vindication* hath unavoidably drawn out this *Reply* to a great length; and I fear I may be thought to have repeated the same things too often upon different Occasions: But the *Truth* frequently requires this Method; and by it, is often set in a clearer light, than otherwise it would be.

It would now be proper to conclude; but that I think my self obliged to say something to Your severe *Criticisms* upon Mr. *West*, at the end of your *Preface*. For, since He hath incurr'd Your Displeasure so grievously, for *encouraging*, and *assisting*, the *Ægyptian*, as Your Phrase is, [p. 82.] it is but just that the *Ægyptian* should take upon himself the Resentments, of which He was the sole Occasion. 1. In the first place, therefore, I beg leave to ask why You should so readily apply to Your self, what was said by him in general. If He hath spoken of a particular *Notion*, and given such an account of it, as that You disclaim it; what concern have You in it, on whom He never fixed it? 2. I observe that a Person of Your Abilities descends very low, when He takes notice of what is manifestly an Error of the Press, as a piece of *false Grammar*. If the same method were taken with Your self; this very *Preface* would furnish us with *Mistakes*, not at all inferior to this: As the 171st Page of this *Volume* unfortunately doth with a piece of *Grammar* exactly parallel to it; in which You speak of *those Men who makes us their Derision*. One would think this passage fatally overlooked by You, that it might stand upon Record against Your indecent *Critical Severity* upon others. 3. I observe that You forget Your self, in the midst of Your *Criticism*: and, in order to give the better turn to Your *Satyr*, allow that to be good *Divinity*, the contrary to which, this *Preface* informs us, Your *Sermon* was designed to teach, viz. that the practice of *Christian Virtues* hath a fairer Title to present Happiness, than

than their contrary Vices, setting aside the consideration of a Future Reward. Now, in the *Sermon*, You teach that the *Virtues* You name, tend to make the best of Men, the most miserable at present: And, in this *Preface*, You tell us, You mean this peculiarly of *Christian Virtues*. What Consistency is there in these things? Is this good Divinity at one time: and the contrary to it good Divinity at another? 4. You endeavour to make Your Adversary Ridiculous, by making him speak that Nonsense, which indeed He doth not speak. For I think it very allowable to speak thus, It doth not appear that the Antients ever denied the happy tendency of *Virtue*; tho' some Moderns have invented a *Notion* which overturns it. For the word *Invent*, doth not carry along with it the *Idea* of a first *Inventor*. Nay, it would be allowable to say, even of the *Art* of *Printing* it self, (which is Your *Instance*,) It doth not appear that the Antients invented it, tho' the Moderns have. For there may be more *Inventors* than one of the same *Notion*; or the same *Art*. But it is not at all parallel to this, to say, *Tho' a Notion hath been invented of late*, yet it doth not appear the *Pharisees* of old had the same: For, in this, You design that the word *invented* should be confined to the first invention of it. Nor is it parallel to say, *The Art of Printing doth not appear to have been known to the Antients*, tho' it hath been invented since their times; that is, according to You, first invented: For otherwise, it is no more than to say, It doth not appear that the Antients found out any such *Art*; tho' the Moderns have been ingenious enough to do it. So that, I think, You need not have made Your self so pleasant upon this Head. 5. You give no proof, besides Your own Affirmation, that Mr. *W.* hath given an injurious account of Your *Notion*. Nor do I believe that you can. For if Your *Notion* doth not prefer the brutish Pleasures before those of Religion, as to the present Life; I confess it is hard to find out what Your *Notion* is: And if it doth; the more brutish any Pleasures are, the more preferable to those of Religion.

If this be *unseemly Language*; blame Your own *Notion*. Look into your own *Sermon*, and see how You Yourself speak of the *Pleasures* of the *Beasts*; of the *Pleasures of Sense* relished by them in a more exquisite degree; and the like: which I care not indeed to repeat. And if You find occasion to reprehend this in others; I intreat You, correct it in *Your self*, whose *Doctrine* it is that gives just ground for such a Representation. 6. The *Pharisees* were the most bitter, and watchful *Enemies*, our *Blessed Lord* had; and ready to lay hold on any thing, either in his *Doctrine*, or *Life*, which they could turn to his *Disadvantage*: And therefore, it was extremely proper to observe that even *They* never made any such *Objection* as this against our *Lord*, that the *Morality* He taught was so different from all that was taught by *Reason*, that it tended to make his *Followers* the most miserable of Men, in this *Life*, in the ordinary course of God's *Providence*. This certainly they might have managed so much to his disadvantage, could they have said it with any colour; that it had been worth their while to have cast it, as a *Stumbling-block*, in the way of the *Gospel*. And, I pray, why may not any one be allowed to take notice of this? or why must You be so apt to think that the *Pharisees* are here, by mistake, mentioned, instead of the *Sadducees*; unless it be requisite that every one should write, and speak, and intend, just what You see fit? 7. You cannot imagine why a Jewish Sect should be represented as delivering their *Judgment* concerning the consequence of practising the *Christian Virtues*. But others will very easily imagine that a *Jewish Sect* may very fitly be represented as it is in this place; and that it may very aptly be observed that the *Pharisees*, who were *Witnesses* of what our *Lord* taught, and had it in their power to know his *Doctrine* exactly; and were ever ready to lay hold on any colourable pretense to his disadvantage; that even these, I say, never denied the tendency of his *Moral Doctrine* to present *Happiness*. But, setting

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afide this *just* Reply, I think *You*, of all Persons, should have avoided mentioning Your surprize upon this Head, because You declare that, in Your *Sermon*, Your Argument is founded upon the nature, and tendency, of *Christian Virtues*, as different from *Heathen*; and yet more than once affirm that the *Wiseſt Heathens* made use of Your *Argument* for a Future State: i. e. You represent Heathens, as delivering their judgment concerning the consequence of practising Christian Virtue: which, according to You, is a thing different, in its tendency, from their own *Virtue*; and was utterly unknown to them. This makes it, indeed, very *unaccountable* in You, to bring in their *Authority*: But those who think *Christian Morality*, at least, in many Instances, of the same species, and tendency, with all other *Morality*, founded upon Truth, and sound Reason, may be allowed to bring in the Judgment of others about it; who, supposing they knew it not, under the notion of *Christian Virtue*, yet were acquainted with what, according to them, differed not in kind, or tendency, from it. Much more may the *Pharisees*, who had it both in their Power, and Will, to examine nicely into our *Lords Doctrine*, be represented, as not denying the happy tendency of it in this World. 8. Last of all, Why You should, after You have endeavoured to expose Mr. *W.* as much as You thought fit, not be content with that: but bring in so worthy a Gentleman as Mr. *Jervoise* by Name, and others, to bear their part in Your *Farce*, will remain a wonder to all, who understand the Rules of Civility, and good Manners. I am tempted to say something more of this, but shall forbear; not doubting but that those Gentlemen are perfectly of your Opinion, that some Attacks are so harmless, that nothing but a Defense can make them considerable. p. 67. I once more pray God to forgive You all Your unjust Insinuations against my Self; and to lead You to the acknowledgment of the Truth; being still, as in *Christian Duty* bound,

Your Hearty Well-Wisher, &c.

P O S T.

P O S T S C R I P T.

HAVING read over your *Sermon*, now Reprinted, concerning the *Power of Charity to cover Sins*, I lay hold on this Opportunity of representing to *Your self*, and the *World*, my Thoughts concerning *several Passages* in it: which, I assure You, I should not do, were it not, that, upon the most mature Consideration, I am not able to reconcile them with some important Truths; or with the Terms of Salvation plainly reveled in the *Gospel*; and therefore think there is reason to fear that they may be of most fatal Consequence to many Men, by infusing into them false Notions concerning the most excellent of *Virtues*; or by engaging them to place their Hopes upon such a Foundation, as must at last miserably deceive them. These *Passages*, I beg leave now to lay before *You*; together with such *Observations* concerning them, as appear to me to deserve the consideration of all *Christians*, who are truly concern'd about the *Terms* of their *Eternal Salvation*.

Your main *Doctrine* is summ'd up, by Your self, in this general Proposition, *The Virtue of Charity is of so great price in the sight of God, that they who possess, and exercise it in any eminent manner, are peculiarly entitl'd to the divine Favour, and Pardon, in regard to numberless Slips, and Failings, in their Duty, which they may be otherwise guilty of. This great Christian Perfection, of which they are Masters, shall make many little Imperfections, to be overlooked, and unobserved. This main Doctrine, tho', as I am persuaded, against the design of Your Text, yet, I should have left free from Censure, considering that You might be understood only of such unavoidable Slips, and Failings, and little Imperfections, as have not the Wrath of God in another World, expressly reveled against them in the Gospel. But the Particulars which follow, and the Manner in which You chuse to explain this general Proposition, cannot so readily be pass'd over.*

I must observe likewise, in order to do You justice, that the *Charity*, which *You* suppose to be of this great force, and efficacy, is sometimes declared to be the Love both of God, and Man, as comprehending all, or almost all, the *moral Duties*, and that regular Behaviour which must naturally follow from so divine, and fruitful a Principle, [p. 46.] nay, that this is the *Queen of Virtues*; and that *the rest constantly attend upon her, appearing and disappearing with her*, [p. 58.] tho' St. Peter's Charity, is *Charity amongst one another*; and that which hath the peculiar Promise of Forgiveness annexed to it, however this Promise be to be understood, is the *Charity*, by which we forgive one another. *Tours* is indeed of much greater extent: and, as You say, leaves the Man incapable of *very gross Sins*, [p. 47;] I should think, incapable of *any* at all, for it self to cover. And the Man actuated by this *divine* and comprehensive *Virtue*, may properly, after this, be said to have *no Sins to be covered*: because *Charity*, in this sense, is inconsistent with any; and cannot be said to take away the Guilt of them, but by taking away their Existence. Neither for this, tho' I think it remote from the design of Your *Text*, should I have given You this trouble: because if Men could once be persuaded to possess themselves of *Charity*, in this extent; they could not but come up to the *Terms* of the *Gospel*, which is all that I am concerned about. But alas! what follows, doth not appear to be of so innocent a nature; or of so good a tendency as this: and therefore deserves to be very carefully examined.

1. In the midst of this account of *Charity*, after you have told us that the Man, possess'd of this Principle, *cannot be supposed capable of committing any heinous Sins, whilst He is under the guidance of it*; You immediately subjoin, *And, as for those which he had fallen into, before the attainment of this Gift, they were certainly remitted also, and covered before the attainment of it; else doubtless, He had never attained it*, [p. 47.] On the contrary, the

the Gospel doth, over and over again, declare, that *unless we forgive Men their Trespases, our heavenly Father will not forgive us the Trespases* which we have at any time committed against Him; and, as plainly as Words can do it, assures us, that our former Sins shall not be covered, till we have attained that *Charity*, to which the Promise of Forgiveness is annexed. Besides that You do, by this *Doctrine*, make *Charity* to be of no force, and of no account with God, with respect to our *past Sins*: which, it seems, He pardons without any regard to our attainment of *Charity*; nay, whilst we are void of it, and before we have attained it; notwithstanding that he hath expressly declared the contrary. This therefore, I cannot but desire You to consider; and to see whether it be possible to reconcile it with many of the plainest Declarations of the *New Testament*.

2. In the account You give us of the *Grounds, and Reasons, of this wondrous Efficacy attributed to Charity*, You tell us, that the *Charitable Man* is peculiarly intitled to the *Pardon of many Sins*, because *He is in a peculiar manner liable to incur the Guilt of many*, [p. 53.] Just now it was said, that the *rest of the Virtues constantly attend upon Charity*; that *no great Guilt of any kind can well be thought to harbour in that Breast where true Charity dwells*; and the *charitable Man* was declared *incapable of committing any heinous Sins*. Now, He is the most liable, of all others, to incur the *Guilt of many Sins*; and these, not of the *lightest* sort, as will appear. Let us see then, by what means this strange thing comes to pass. Why, it proceeds, 1. From *that frame of mind, on which Charity is grafted*: and 2. From *the very Exercise of the Virtue it self*. 1. This most excellent *Virtue* is unfortunately grafted, and that *always, on Good Nature, and sweetness of Disposition*. If a *natural sweetness of Disposition* be meant here, as it seems to be, from the *Sentence* before, this, I think, should not be said, and cannot be true, because the Gospel doth indispensably require the *Exercise*

cise of *Charity*, from Men of all sorts of *Natural Dispositions*: And so, according to this way of speaking, either all Men, are Men of a *natural sweetness of Disposition*; or there are Men, who cannot justly be blamed for the neglect of this *Duty*; which, it seems, cannot be attain'd, or possess'd, where there is not what we call a *natural sweetness of Disposition*. On the contrary, I cannot but think that the *roughest natural Temper*, that ever was call'd upon to practise this *Virtue*, might bring it self to do it, as the *Gospel* requires: And certainly no *Christian* of such a *Temper* will be condemn'd at last; unless it had been possible for *Him* to have practis'd it, notwithstanding his natural *Temper*, All Men can be beneficent, and forgiving, (if they will heartily set themselves about the Work of *Religion*,) as well as *Temperate*, and *Honest*: And we may as well excuse Men from the practice of *Temperance*, or *Chastity*, or *Honesty*, on account of their *natural Tempers*, as lay down such an account of *Charity*, as doth in effect excuse all Men from the practice of it, who have not what You call a *sweetness of Temper*; and this, according to You, in such a degree, as hinders them from preserving their Innocence, and Integrity. For, to proceed to what I much more blame,

The *Temper*, on which alone You will permit *Charity* to be founded, is far removed from the true *Good Nature*: for it is declared by You, to be such a *Temper*, as binds us from arming our selves with that stubborn, uncomplying *Virtue*, which is requisite to preserve a Man undefiled, and blameless. It makes us easy, and yielding, -- Ready to comply with a thousand things, (of which we are not exactly well satisfied,) upon the pure score of *Good Nature*, &c. [p. 54.] O glorious account of the most excellent of *Christian Virtues*! which makes it the Daughter of *Weakness*, and the Companion of a ship-wreck'd Conscience! That *Charity* should be declared always to be grafted upon a *Nature*, which hinders us from the acquisition of a stubborn, uncomplying *Virtue*! on a *Nature*, that make us
comply

comply with a *thousand things*, which we doubt whether they be lawful, or no! and that this should be represented as the true *Good Nature*, and the *desireable sweetness of Disposition*! Let all who ever read the Gospel declare, whether this *stubborn, in complying, Virtue*, be not absolutely commanded, as well as the most *extensive Charity*; whether the *Religion* which is from above, be not *first pure*, and then *peaceable*; whether it be not our *Duty*, our *indispensable Duty*, to disclaim all *Peace*, and not only to *allow our selves to be troublesome*, as Your Words are, but to *make our selves so*, if we cannot otherwise preserve our selves innocent; and lastly, whether this *Temper*, which is here represented as the *hindrance to Innocence*, and to an *unspotted Conscience*, and as the guide to *Sin*, be not so far from being a *lovely, and desireable Temper*, as You declare it to be, [p. 53.] that it is the greatest unhappiness that can befall a *Christian*, and the greatest Obstacle in his way to *Eternal Glory*. If this be so; can *Christian Charity* necessarily imply in it, what the *Christian Religion* first of all forbids? A true *Christian* scorns such *Compliances*, as are made even to the *shadows of Vice*. He is the most *stubborn*, the most *inflexible*, of Men, in every thing, about the *lawfulness* of which he barely doubts. And how then can the *charitable Christian* be thus represented? Besides, It is the highest want of *Charity*, to *comply*, out of a false *Good Nature*, with any received Customs, or Opinions, or Practices, which are not plainly, and visibly, Honourable, and Lawful: So far is it from being true, that *Charity* is founded *always* upon a Nature that makes us do it, and hinders us from doing the contrary. Nay, You your self, in this very *Sermon*, [p. 61.] say, that the *Rules of Charity* it self *forbid us to be silent*, or to *suffer the Doctrine* of some Men, concerning *Justification*, to be thought an innocent Error. And doth not *Charity* it self therefore, forbid us to be *silent*, or *compliant*, or *yielding*, I will not say in a *thousand things*, but, even in *one point*, concerning

ing which our *Consciences* are not satisfied? 2. The *Exercise of Charity*, especially where the Principle of it is strong, is declared, by you, to lay us open to several Failings. For instance, 1. Charity makes us omit oftentimes the Duties incumbent on us from our Professions and Callings, [p. 54.]

This is a very bad sort of Charity indeed, which is inconsistent with the performance of those Duties, which are as indispensable, as Charity it self: and I fear such a mis-named Charity as this, will be so far from covering our other Sins, that it will not be able to cover it self. Assuredly, the *Christian Religion* knows nothing of it: Nor doth it deserve to be represented to the People, as requiring a Duty, inconsistent with their other Duties.

2. It makes us (with a perhaps) neglect to take care of those, whom it is the first point of Charity to take care of, our Children, and Families, [ib.] You needed not to have added the perhaps: for, if the former be true, this follows unavoidably. Now, Sir, Is not this a very strange sort of Charity, that makes us neglect the very first point of Charity? And are these the little Failings You speak of, the neglect of the first Branches of Charity it self?

And if Charity shall cover other Sins; shall it likewise cover the neglect of it self? For God's sake, to what shall we come at last, if we can thus represent the *Christian Religion*, in one of the principal points belonging to it? We should remember, I think, that all Virtues, as all Truths, are perfectly consistent with one another;

that whatsoever is inconsistent with our Duty in any higher respect, is on that account not our Duty; that all the parts of Charity, are in perfect harmony; and that He, who neglects the first points of it, upon pretense of performing others of a lesser account, is not a charitable Man, in the Gospel-account. 3. Charity is declared to warm us with such a Zeal for doing good, as breaks out sometimes into Acts not reconcileable with the Rules of right Reason, &c. [ib.] And St. Francis's preaching the Gospel to Beasts, and Birds, is given as an instance of this, [p. 55.]

I confess, it goes hard with our Religion, when that Charity,

rity, to which the Promises of God are annexed in the Gospel, is made the Parent of Folly and Enthusiasm; of foolish Undertakings, and impracticable Designs; of all the extravagant Rants, and Freaks, of Devotion, [ib.] When what is owing to a distempered Brain, and an heated Imagination, is ascribed to this Divine Virtue; nay, when it is declared, by a Christian Divine, that the ground, and reason, why Charity should be so favoured by God, as to be invested with the Power of covering Sins, is, because it is founded upon a Temper inconsistent with an undefiled Innocence; because it is it self inconsistent with it self, and other necessary Duties; because it is the Daughter of Weakness, the Sister of Sin, and the Parent of Folly: which are in my opinion sufficient reasons, why it should be punished, not rewarded, in the other World. Again, 4. *The charitable Man, who loves every thing, doth not fail sometimes to love his own Virtue too; to be so struck with the Excellence of Charity, as to be too little concerned for faith,* [p. 56.] And therefore, his Charity, must be rewarded at last, because it disposeth him, according to this, to over-rate his own Attainments in Charity. You might as well have said, *The charitable Man, who loves every thing, doth not fail sometimes to love even Vice it self.* But what hath Charity to do with this? Doth that Charity, which, in its due extent, is never separated from Humility, over-rate it self? Nay, doth it not rather teach a Man, to prefer the Acquisitions of others, before his own? *This is truly, as Your Words are, p. 70. for the sake of Charity, to forget the true character, and essential properties, of it: which are, as St. Paul tells us, not to vaunt it self, not to be puffed up.* Nay, Do not You your self make it spring from Divine Love: and is it possible that a Charity of such an original, and such a comprehension, should dispose Men to be less concerned than they ought, about that Faith, on which it self is founded? Or, is it possible that that Charity should be pleasing to God, which tends to the ship-wreck of that Faith, without which it is impossible to please God? If
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You mean, that some have been known to be so taken up with doing good to the outward Estates of others, that they have little concerned themselves about other things; I answer, this is not in the least owing to their *Charity*: any more than it is owing to the *Honesty*, and *Justice*, of some, that they neglect *Charity*, and *Generosity*; or, to the *Chastity*, and *Temperance*, of others, that they over-look other *Duties*; or, to the nature of *Faith*, that some, as you observe, p. 60. *esteem Good Works* of very little account before God. Besides, it is of such a *Charity*, as covers *Sins*, that you are treating. If therefore the *Charity* of these Men, you speak of, will atone for their little concern for *Faith*, they need not, as I see, be much concerned about it: If it will not; then it signifieth nothing to your purpose, to allege this concerning their *Charity*, that God will favour it at last, because it hath disposed them to such a neglect, as *Charity* it self cannot atone for. But, in one word, Is it not very plain that it can be no reason, or ground, for the *Favour* annexed by God to *Charity*, that it doth, either in its foundation, or in it self, dispose Men to many *sins*; and to such as God hath reveled his wrath against, in the *Gospel*? And is it not as plain, that it is very inconsistent in You to argue thus, who quickly after, [p. 59.] give the contrary Reason for this, in these words, *It is the nature of Charity to be comprehensive of, and abounding in, many Duties: and therefore, it is her Reward also, to be a Screen for many Failings.* If this be a true, and good Reason; how can the other be good likewise: viz. that it peculiarly makes Men liable to many *Sins*; and therefore must be rewarded with the Honour of being a Screen for many *Sins*?

To proceed,

3. Another Reason You give, for the Pardon of the charitable Man's Sins, is because his *Charity* hath engaged the united Prayers of Multitudes; and no wonder if they prevail, [p. 57.] I answer, If his *Sins* be such as the *Gospel* condemns; and he hath not forsaken them;
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the *united Prayers* of the whole Creation will avail nothing towards his *Pardon*, as surely as God is true: And whoever teacheth otherwise, alters the *Terms of Acceptance*, settled by God himself. If they be such, as You improperly stile *Sins*; such Imperfections as are consistent with a *State of Safety*, upon the *Terms* declared in the *Gospel*; they stand not in need of such *united Prayers*. But what is this to the *Power* of his own *Charity* to cover his *Sins*: when this is here ascribed to the force of the *united Prayers* of others; not to the *Virtue* of his *Charity*?

4. In the *Inferences* You draw from what You have before laid down, You observe, p. 62, that *God hath a right to all the highest Instances, and Degrees, of Virtue, that it is possible for us to abound in; that we are strictly obliged to practise them to the utmost: And yet so far is he pleased to abate of this Right, as to accept the Performance of one great Duty, in lieu of the Omission, (you should have said, the Performance,) of many others.* This *Act of Grace* You magnify, by rightly observing, that *Reason* never did, or could, make this known to the *Heathen World*. I know not how indeed *Reason* should make known that, which is so highly absurd, and unreasonable. You add, that the *Gospel* hath now reveled it unto us. I desire to know the *place*, where this *Revelation* is to be found. *St. Paul* tells us, that in the *Gospel* the *Wrath* of God is reveled from Heaven equally against all *Unrighteousness* of Men; that the *Gospel* brings *Salvation* to us only by teaching us to deny *Ungodliness*, and worldly *Lusts*, and to live soberly, righteously, and godlily, in this present *World*; that our *Obligations* to all *Morality*, are raised higher by the *assurance* of a *Day of Judgment*, in which we shall be condemn'd, if we do not practise it; that all the *Works of the Flesh*, which he frequently enumerates, shall finally exclude Men from the *Kingdom of Heaven*; and warns us against those *vain Words* which would deceive us into contrary *Hopes*. *St. James*, as if some such *Doctrine*

as this had been taught in his *Days*, is so far from teaching that *one great Duty* shall be accepted in lieu of *many others*; that He declares that the *keeping of all the Commandments*, except *one*, shall not atone for the neglect of that *one*; but that the Neglector shall be punished, as breaking into that *whole Law* which the *Divine Authority* hath laid upon him. Numberless Declarations might here be quoted, from the *New Testament*, to shew that the whole *Tenor* of the *Gospel* is to this purpose. And now, for a *Christian Divine* to come, and tell the World, that *one great Duty* shall be accepted, instead of *many others*; that if they omit *many others*, they may be safe at last; and that this is plainly reveled in the *Gospel*: what is this, but to render Men regardless of those *many other Duties*; and easy, and secure, under the sense of omitting them? Nay, why should they not omit them? Or, what obligation are they under, to perform them? Or, how is it true, that they are *strictly obliged* to this *performance*, as You say: if, as in the same Breath You teach them, the *Gospel* declares, they may be safe without them? At this rate, we have, (as You say, p. 63) no reason to complain of the *strictness* of our Rule, or the *hardships* of our *Christian Warfare*. The Rule, as You go on, is *strict* indeed: but then, as there are great *Helps*, and *Assistances*, enabling us to live up to it; so *GREAT ABATEMENTS*, and *ALLOWANCES*, we see, are made to us at last, if we do not. I know not, indeed, what You see: For my own part, I hope, for the sake of *Virtue*, and the honour of the *Gospel*, never to see any thing like it. Nay, Is it not in it self absurd to suppose, that *Almighty God* doth, in the *Gospel*, give us a *strict Rule*; that, in the same *Gospel*, He offers us such *Assistances*, as that we may live up to it, if we please; and yet that in this same *Gospel* He declares that He will make *great Abatements*, and *Allowances*, at last, if we do not; that is, that we shall be happy at last, whether we do, or do not; that, if we practise one very agreeable, and pleasant, *Virtue*, that shall atone for
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our neglect of *many others*? What is this, but to suppose *Almighty God* acting a weaker part than we would suppose any earthly *Parent*, or *Legislator*, to act? first, requiring *Obedience* to a *strict Rule*; and this possible to be performed; and this with the Threatnings of Punishment against Offenders: and at the same time (not reserving the power of *Abatements* in his own Breast, but) openly declaring that he will not punish those who do not obey this *strict Rule*, if so be that in *one delightful* point they do not fail? In vain hath the *Gospel* been preached, for the Reformation of all vicious and immoral Men; In vain is the *Wrath* to come proposed in it; In vain are we called upon from Heaven to do the *whole Will* of God; if such *Doctrines* as this be admitted, and propagated. You cannot say that You mean this of *Charity*, in the extent You sometimes describe it, as comprehending the whole *Evangelical Law*: For whoever practiseth this, comes up to the *strict Rule* laid down; is incapable of the neglect of any *Duties* enjoined in the *Gospel*; stands not in need of those great *Abatements*, and *Allowances*, You speak of. And if You leave him under the Guilt of neglecting but *one Duty*; St. *James* expressly condemns Your fond Assertion. But indeed the whole strain of this *Passage* is against this Sense: and the Expression is framed according to the Wishes of *those*, who love to think of paying God an *Equivalent* for a *Life of Virtue*, and Holiness; as much as themselves could desire. Add to this, that You preclude Your self from this Excuse, by affirming, [p. 66.] that our *Acquittal*, as to neglect, in other parts of our Duty, will depend very much upon our being able to give a good Answer concerning that *one Branch of Charity*, which consists in doing good to the *outward Estates* of others. Here again, it is evident, You teach that our performance of this *one Branch of Charity* will, in effect, acquit us at the last Day, tho' we now continue in the neglects of other *Duties* required in the *Gospel*; nay, tho' we neglect other parts of the *Rule of Charity* it self, and will not so much as forgive others their *Trespases* against us. For You may as well say of *this*, that it will be aton'd for, if we do the *Acts of Charity* mentioned *Matth. 25.* as of the neglect of any other Duty of the *Evangelical Law*. But to say either of these, is to contradict other plain, and positive, *Declarations of Holy Scripture*: which declare God's *Wrath* against other *Sinners*, as plainly as as this doth against the *Unmerciful*. And in interpreting such places, it becomes us to have a strict regard to all other *Declarations of God's Will*. On the contrary, I affirm, that our *Acquittal*, as to neglects in other parts of our Duty, is so far from depending very much upon our being able to give a good Answer, in that one Case; that, supposing us able to give never so good an one concerning feeding the *Hungry*, and the like; Yet, if we have not forgiven Men their *Trespases* against us, our heavenly Father will not forgive Ours against Himself; and, if we have not mortified the *Flesh*, with the *Lusts* thereof, so as to become *Chast*, and *Temperate*, we are not *Christ's*, nor shall be owned as his true *Disciples*. In a word, it may as well be argued, that our *Acquittal*, as to other points, shall depend upon *Faith*, or *Hope*, or *Purity*, or *Peaceableness*: because the Promises

of God's Favour, and Blessings, have been pronounced upon these. But the Gospel knows no such Doctrine; nor of any Atonement, (no not by the Blood of Jesus Christ himself,) for any Sins condemned in it, but what are forsaken and amended. Upon this condition only, doth it propose Pardon of Sins, Salvation, and Happiness, to the Sons of Men. And if this be not true; and consequently exactly to be regarded, in all the representations of the Terms of Pardon, and Justification, given by the Ministers of Christ; then is it not true, that the Grace of God, bringing Salvation, hath appeared in the Gospel, teaching us to deny Ungodliness, and worldly Lusts; and to live soberly, righteously, and godlily. On the contrary, if Your account of the Gospel-Terms be just; St. Paul ought rather to have said, that the salutary Grace, or Mercy of God, hath appeared in it, teaching us that there is no absolute necessity to deny ungodliness, and worldly lusts; or to live soberly, righteously, and godlily; but that God will accept of one Duty, in lieu of many others; that our performance of that shall be our Justification, notwithstanding our omission of many others. But this is a sort of Salvation, in my judgment, unworthy of the Nature of Man, to receive; and unworthy of the Nature of God, to offer.

Let me, therefore, entreat You to review the groundless, and pernicious Doctrine You have unwarily taught, on this Subject. Consider, if Charity ought to be represented, as founded upon a Temper, inconsistent with Innocence, and an unspotted Conscience; as productive of Vice, and Folly, and Madness; as leading to the neglect of the principal Branches of it self? and the like: and whether it becomes a Christian Divine to set the several parts of God's Law at variance; and to make the performance of one of them, an Atonement for the neglect of others, as indispensably required; or, having done this, whether it doth not become Him to make reparation for so great an Injury as must arise from hence to the Gospel, and to the Interest of Virtue in the World. It is not my business, nor will the bounds of this Paper permit me, to settle the true, and full, meaning of Your Text. But in obscure Passages, we had better deliver no Interpretation; or be content with what You may call a dull, and flat one; than contend for one directly contrary to numberless plain, and uncontroverted Passages. And, as for Charity; I hope there is in the Gospel sufficient encouragement to the practice of it, without our needing to strain the Words of this particular Verse to so extravagant a Sense, as no wise Man can believe that we ought, and no good Man would wish, that we might, take them in; as You express Your self, [p. 66.] That You your self have put so extravagant a Sense upon Your Text, in Your Explications, and Enlargements upon it, I have endeavoured to convince You; that You may, upon the review, publicly retract it, and joyn in inculcating that most plain, and most important, part of the Gospel, that the Amendment of the Lives of Sinners, is in it indispensably required; and particularly, that one Duty shall not in the least atone for the neglect of many others; nay, that the performance of all Duties, except one, shall not atone for the neglect of that one. To the Acknowledgement of which great Truth, without the certainty of which the Interest of Virtue must fall in the World, I pray God direct you; and again take leave.

F I N I S.

V.

A B R I E F
VINDICATION
O F T H E

Antient Prophets

F R O M T H E

Imputations and Misrepresenta-
tions of such as adhere to
our Present Pretenders to
I N S P I R A T I O N.

In a L E T T E R to
Sir RICHARD BULKELEY, Bar^r

Written in the Year, 1709.

V.

A BRIEF

VINDICATION

OF THE

Antient Prophecy

FROM THE

Impugnations and Misrepresentations

of such as adhere to

our Jewish Religion

INSCRIPTION

by J. L. L. A. R.

at the END OF THE

Year 1793

P R E F A C E.

THE following Papers have been sometime drawn up; though not published before, because it was hoped by some, that the Failure of Events, in many Instances, would by this time have put a Stop to the Pretenses of our Modern Prophets, (as they call themselves;) and convinced their Followers, as many of them promised they should, of the Vanity and Delusion of those Pretenses. I confess, for my own Part, I always thought, and often said it, that they would make use of those very Evasions for holding out longer than any Period fixed, which I see now they have actually had Recourse to. And whether they did or no; whether they proceeded or desisted; it was my Judgment that the Wounds which they had given to the Antient Prophets, and the strange Absurdities which they had fixed upon them in their Zeal for their own Defense, were still the same; and still had the same tendency to weaken the Credit of all Revel'd Religion amongst Men of Unstable Principles: by whom they were embraced, I found, and used, to that very Purpose. So that it is not so much out of Expectation to convince any Persons engaged in this Modern Cause, who have taken fresh Courage from the Failures God hath vouchsafed them; (tho' I could heartily wish for such an Effect;) as with Design to maintain the

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Credit of the Antient Prophets that I now give the World this Trouble : viz. To shew that there is no Similitude in any one Material Instance between them ; that all their Allegations to the contrary are groundless ; and that our New Prophets must stand or fall by themselves, without engaging the Antient ones in their Quarrel. This seemed necessary in Justice to the sacred Writings: For which it is to be hoped that all Concern is not lost amongst Men ; tho' the Patrons of this New Dispensation have struck such a Stroke at them in their hasty Zeal, as if they cared not what became of them, so their New Cause might gain Ground. I tax them not with any evil Design against them : But endeavour to guard against the Evil Effects of what they have unwarily, and without Ground, fixed them upon.

If, in the doing this, I differ in any Particular from a received Notion, or the Judgment of others, who equally disapprove the Injustice done to the Old Prophets, let it be pardoned to the good Design which I have in the Main : And if in any Part of this Work I have ignorantly run into any Error of Consequence, let it be detected, and confuted with the Spirit of Demonstration, and Meekness. On the other Side, let not any of the Persons engaged in this New Cause pretend that I am unqualified for such a Work, because I have not (they may imagine) been my self amongst them : For I assure them I take all the Accounts of their Behaviour upon Trust from themselves, believing for the present everything amongst them to be just what they relate it to be, without questioning

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questioning the Truth of their Relations. Besides, my Business is not to comment upon their Proceedings, or to expose them; but to defend the Antient Scripture-Prophets: Of whom, by the Way I must observe, that these Moderns themselves cannot pretend to form any Judgment, if none must be allowed competent Judges, but such as have been Eye-witnesses, and Ear-witnesses, to the very Gestures, and Voices, of the Inspired.

Some judicious Persons may think that too much deference is here paid to the Efforts of Men addicted to our New Prophets. But let it be remembred that the Deference is paid to the Antient Prophets rather than to them: And that when Men of Sense and Learning, in other Points, undertake a Cause of so pernicious Consequence to Reveled Religion, it is not the Weakness of what they say, that will be Antidote enough against the Poison of it; unless it be detected, and evidently laid before the Reader's Eyes.

Others, I find, think that Raillery and Banter is the best Way of handling even the most sacred Matters. But let it be tried first, how Princes, and Men in great Offices, will like to have their Qualities, their Decrees, their Commissions, examined by their Servants and all under them, with an Ayre of Ridicule; and what Ground their just Authority will get in Humane Society, should every thing relating to themselves be universally handled in Humour, and Grimace, and Buffoonry: and then it will be time to try it in more important Matters. I doubt, Mathematical Truths themselves would be exploded by Uni-

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versal Raillery, and Ridicule ; as well as all Order and Decency out of Humane Society : And I fear this New Test of Truth is of that trying Nature, that it will suffer nothing to be true. I am sure, if it should be generally embraced, the World must come at length to be made up of Creatures perpetually grinning, and mimicking, and playing Mountebank-tricks at one another : And they must always be in the Right, who can get the longest and loudest Laugh on their Side. A serious Countenance must be a Monstrous Sight : And an honest enquirer into Truth the greatest Jest imaginablè. And let any one judg what a Blessed State of things must succeed !

It is a melancholy Contemplation to think, how much the Atheism and Profaneness of some tends to the extreme of Enthusiasm in others ; and how reciprocally the Enthusiasm of these others feeds and nourisheth that Atheism, and Profaneness : Whilst the serious and sedate Religion, lying between the two Extremes, suffers from both ; the profane condemning it with Enthusiasm in the Lump for Madness ; and the Enthusiastical representing it as a Dry State, little better than No Religion at all, because it is not guided, and governed by their Maxims, and doth not pretend to their Heighths. I pray God in Mercy to remedy these Evils : And if the following Papers be any ways qualified for that Purpose, to add his Powerful Blessing to the sincere Endeavours of the Writer.



A
VINDICATION
OF THE
Antient Prophets, &c.

In a LETTER to Sir Richard Bulkeley.

S I R,



Take the Liberty thus publickly to lay before your self and the World, the following Remarks upon your late *Defense* of those whom you call *Prophets*: In which you seem to have endeavour'd, with all your Might, to fix as many Absurdities and Contradictions upon the *Antient Prophets*, as your *Learning* and *Sagacity* cou'd find out; that so it might fair equally well, in the Judgment of Men, with *them*, and your *New Friends*. You must not therefore take it amiss, if *one*, who hath as great a Zeal for the *old Prophets* as you have express'd for the *New*, thinks it as necessary to say something in *their* Vindication, as you have judged

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judged it, to appear in Defense of your *New Directors*. This is the chief *Design* of the following *Papers*. But before I enter upon it, it will not be at all improper to premise a few *Considerations*, not unsuitable to the Occasion of this *Debate*.

1. I appeal to your self, if it be not of dangerous Consequence to receive as *Prophets* those who are not truly so, as well as to reject those who are: And whether it doth not equally lay us open to God's Displeasure.

2. Whether we be not, in the *New Testament*, by our *Lord* himself, over and over again fore-warned that many shall appear allarming his People with *Prophetical Warnings*; That many *false Prophets* shall arise: Whether on the other Hand he so much as once warns us of any true *Prophets* whom we are certainly to expect; or once gives us in Charge to attend to any pretended *Revelations* and *Inspirations* concerning his coming; nay, whether he doth not expressly command us not to be alarmed at any such, nor to regard them; but only to be always ready and prepar'd to receive Him, by our good Lives and holy Conversations.

3. Whether *St. Paul*, when he speaks of such as alarmed their Brethren about the coming of *Christ*, gives *Christians* any Ground to expect *Prophets* upon this Subject; or doth not rather divert their Minds from all such *Expectations* by assuring them, as their *Lord* did before him, that *that Day* would come as a *Thief* in the Night, *i. e.* without Preparation and Notice: And this not with Respect to the Careless and Unbelievers only, but with Respect to all the Body of *Christians*: For he speaks of it, as of a Rule so settled, that they needed no Instruction from him about it, *1 Thes. 5. 2.* and to be regarded by all. Then he goes on to inform them that the *Good* will be always ready, and the *Wicked* only careless and unpre-

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unprepared : but represents them both equally without *Prophetical Warnings* of the particular Time of it. The Method he layeth down to the End that *that Day might not overtake them as a Thief*, is, their *watching*, and not walking in Darkneſs, but in *Light* ; without referring them to any, but the *general Warning* given by their *Lord* and *Maſter*. I appeal to your ſelf whether *St. Peter* likewise, in ſpeaking of his *coming*, layeth not down the ſame Rule without a Word concerning *Prophets* before that Day, or any other Warning but what they had had already ; or of any other Preparation beſides *Holy Converſation* and *Godlineſs*. 2 *Pet.* 3. 10, 11, &c. Upon all which Accounts I deſire to know

4. Whether a *Chriſtian* can juſtly be blamed who ſeeks not after any pretended Evidences of *New Prophets* : Whether he may not reaſonably reſt ſatisfied in what he finds in his *Lord's* and his *Apoſtles* Declarations ; and whether, if he prepare himſelf by *Holineſs of Life*, by Attendance upon *God's* Worſhip, by commemorating his *Maſter's* Death and Sufferings in the *Eucharift*, by honeſtly and diligently following the Employments of his Calling ; I ſay, whether it he prepare himſelf by this Method, ſo as to be always ready for his *Maſter's* coming, he doth not more ſtrictly and cloſely follow the Directions of his *Lord*, than *he* who is ſeeking after *New Diſpenſations*, *New Revelations*, and amuſing himſelf with new *Predictions* concerning the very Time, and Year, when his *Lord* ſhall come. Pray conſider, whether there be any thing in the *Gospel* which makes it the Duty of every *Chriſtian* to attend to any who profeſs as *Prophets* to fix the Time of that great *Revolution*, before you condemn thoſe who neglect the *Diſpenſation* you patronize, without neglecting the Preparation which the *Gospel* makes neceſſary for our happy meeting the *Lord of Glory*. We acknowledge a Belief of his coming neceſſary ; and a conſtant *Holineſs of Life* neceſſary

sary. This is the Preparation he expects. But whether he will come at Noon, or at Midnight ; to Day, or to Morrow ; this Year, or next ; in this Age, or the following ; we leave to him, as a thing not necessary to be determined, nor necessary to be believed. And methinks we might hope that *others* should leave the World as undisturb'd, and free, in this Matter, as our *Lord* hath commanded them to be. I wou'd farther ask,

5. Whether we might not reasonably expect that in Justification of *Christian Prophets*, the *Pattern of Christ*, and his *Apostles* should be rather followed and insisted on, than the *Example* or *Behaviour* of *Prophets* under the *Old Testament* ; supposing *these* to be justly represented by you. For though *these* were *Prophets*, truly sent of God ; yet there is a manifest difference between some Parts of the Behaviour and Speech of *them*, and of those under the *New Testament* : As the *Law* of *Moses* was truly *God's Law*, and perfect for the *End* design'd ; yet doth it differ very much from the Plainness and Simplicity of the *Gospel*. I grant that *God's Ways* must often be unaccountable to us : Nor do I pretend to be a complete Judge of them. But to a *Christian* it cannot but be a Prejudice, to see *Christians* pretending to *Inspiration*, by the same *Spirit* which guided *Christ* and his *Apostles*, and yet differing from them to so great a Degree, as if it repented *Almighty God* of the gentle Method in which he chose to visit his *Prophets* at the Beginning of the *Evangelical Dispensation*.

As I thought it proper to premise these few things ; so it is fit likewise, before I enter upon the main Debate, to take some notice of the *Preliminary Part* of your *Defense* ; particularly of what you offer p. 6, 7. in order to prove, from our *Lord's* foretelling the coming of *False Prophets*, that at the same time there must be *True Ones* : Because, in the handling of this

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Point, you have taken Occasion to discover a very unaccountable Part of the Conduct of your *New Friends*; and to endeavour to defend it from *Holy Scripture*. As to the *Point* beforemention'd, therefore, you argue, or seem to argue, two Ways.

I. What Occasion, say you, for *Satan* to send forth *False Prophets*, unless there be *True Ones* at the same time? p. 6. Where by *False Prophets* you mean *Prophets* rais'd up and sent forth by *Satan*. But the Answer is easie, viz. 1. It is the great Interest of *Satan* to disturb Men's Minds, and divert them from the ordinary Means of Grace settled already in the Church of *Christ*; and to bring all *Inspiration* and *Prophecy* into Contempt, if he can; and the like. 2. Unless you can pretend to know all the *Wiles*, and *Cunning* of that *Evil Spirit*, you must not pretend to judge of his Ways, according to the reasoning frequently used by your self. He may have *Ends* to serve which you cannot judge of. 3. You may as well argue that God can't send *True Prophets*, unless there be first *False Ones*, seducing his People: For otherwise, what occasion for them? 4. You are *Historian* enough, to know that there are Instances of *False Prophets* at a Time, when no *True Ones* have been known in the World. Do you think *Satan* had no Part in the sending forth *Mahomet*? And yet what *True Prophets* do we find actually then in the World to whose Designs he expressly oppos'd himself? 5. The *State* of the World since the *Gospel* is very different from what it was before. The Authority of *Jesus Christ* is settled upon most authentic *Evidences*. His *Doctrine* is open to us: We have warning given us to take heed unto it: And no Promise in it of any *New Prophets*; but rather *Intimations* to the contrary. And therefore *False Prophets* without the Appearance of *True ones* at the same time, are less dangerous to those who will attend to the *Gospel*: And may more justly be permitted to impose upon those who divert

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to them. 6. How absurd is it for you to pretend to make us believe that our *Saviour* could not forewarn us, of *False Prophets*, or *pretended Prophets*, to come, without supposing or implying, that there wou'd be *True Ones* at the same time? For cannot any one of the meanest Capacity see that our Lord might have done this, without any such implication? Give me leave for once to put the *Case*, that it was not the Design of *Almighty God* to send any more *Prophets* after the *Establishment* of the *Christian Dispensation* in the World, and yet that he foresaw there would be many *Pretenders* to *Prophecy* after this; upon these Suppositions, had it not been full as proper for our Lord to have forewarn'd his Followers of these *Pretenders*, as if there were to have been *Real ones* at the same time? Or wou'd you preclude him from telling us there wou'd be *Pretenders*, unless he had decreed to send more and more *Real ones* into the World?

II. In your second Way of *arguing* p. 7. you understand by *False Prophets*, such as are under the Influence of *God's Spirit*, and yet do, in the same Breath, mix their own *Falsities* with it, or such Inspirations as are supplied by the *Evil Spirit*, the *Father of Lies*: And so they must be themselves *True Prophets* as well as *False Prophets*; and there likewise must be *True Prophets* to discern these *Falshoods*. This is all I can make of this obscure Passage: And I believe the like to this was never yet heard of; that the *False Prophets*, of whom we are forewarn'd by our *Saviour*, and to whom we are commanded not to attend (for of these you are speaking,) are such as are sent forth by God; inspir'd by his Spirit; but yet mix their own, or a worse, with it, in the same continued Discourse deliver'd all as the Dictates of God himself. I hope, therefore, you will not take it amiss, if we call these Persons whom you defend, *False Prophets*, when you have here acknowledg'd that it is a frequent thing for them under the same *Inspiration* to speak *Truth* and *Falshood*;

Falshood; nay, to be assisted, not in different Discourses, but the same, by the *Father of Truth*, and the *Father of Lyes*. As you, for the sake of some *Truths*, are pleas'd to think them *True Prophets*: So give us leave, for the sake of some *Falshoods*, which you acknowledge *may be further'd* by the *Evil Spirit*, to account them *False Prophets*, and such as are assisted by the *Evil Spirit*. And, I pray, what need we desire any farther Proof? The *False Prophets*, (an Account of whom you are now giving us) are those against whom our *Saviour* forewarn'd us. These, you say, are such as mix their own, or a worse, Spirit, with the *Divine*, in the same Discourse; and all deliver'd as one *Inspiration*. Well then, if this be so, and if your *Friends* come up exactly to this *Definition of False Prophets*, as you here contend they do; what remains but that *these* are of the Number of those *False Prophets* who, our *Saviour* forewarn'd us, shou'd arise, and to whom all Christians are forbid to attend? Their *Cause* is extremely oblig'd to you indeed: for here you have made them at least in Part to belong to *Satan*; and prov'd them to be the *False Prophets* spoken of by our Lord. The *Apostle* argues, what *Fellowship* hath *Christ* with *Belial*? But here you have united the great *God*, and his greatest *Enemy*, and given them both a Property in the same *Temple* at the same time. I confess I shou'd think from hence that you wrote this *Page* with Design to expose, instead of defending, them; were it not that you are so kind as to bring in the *Scripture* for their Defense; which I will now be so just as to vindicate from your groundless Imputations. For, to defend your *Friends* in this Instance.

I. You say, the *False Prophets* in *Scripture* were not *Hypocrites*, but really under a *Prophetic Influence*. Thus *Jeremiah* did not accuse *Hananiah* of not being at all a *Prophet*; but only said upon a particular occasion, *The Lord hath not spoken by Thee*. To apply this to the Case before

us. We are content to say the same, if you like it. The *Prophets* you defend are *Prophets*: But the *Lord* hath not spoken by them. If they be under a *Prophetic Influence*; it must be either from God, or the *Evil Spirit*. If the *Lord* hath not spoken by them, you have told us the Consequence, your self, viz. some other *Spirit* hath. But, I pray, consider, did the *Lord* speak by *Hananiah* at all at that time? And did he not pretend to speak the Words of the *Lord*, when he did not? And was he not a *False Prophet* in this Sense, professing himself influenc'd by *God* when he was not at all? Is here any thing of such a *Mixture of Spirits* as you are now absurdly defending? Did the *Lord* require any Body to attend to *Hananiah*? Nay, did he not punish his vain *Pretences* with *Death*? This should make those tremble, who assume to themselves to speak in *God's* Name; lest the *People* of this Land should at length be convinced of their false *Pretences*, in like manner as the *Jews* were of those of *Hananiah*. Again, you say, *Ahab's Prophets* were *Prophets*. But, according to Scripture, they were the *Prophets* of an *Evil Spirit*, and entirely under his *Direction*; not in the least Part of their Discourse influenc'd by *God*. Are your *Friends Prophets* in this Sense? or why is this alleg'd? You ought in their *Vindication* to have produc'd such as spake, in the same Discourse, under the Influence of *God*, and of *Satan*: Or such as, under the Influence of *God*, dared to mix their own Inventions, and deliver them exactly as his *Words*, and yet were approv'd by him, and a Nation commanded to adhere to them. But you have greatly wander'd from this, and only furnish'd us with an unanswerable Argument against those you defend. For I argue, if these *Persons*, under the same Agitations, and with the same Manner of Pronunciation, do deliver their own *Imaginations*, and *God's* Message, thinking both to be equally *Inspiration*; as you acknow-

acknowledge; p. 9. then is their own *Natural Power* sufficient, without the Impulse of God's Spirit, to be the Cause of what you so much wonder at. You say indeed that their *Motions* and *Agitations* are *involuntary*: But the Motion of their *Tongue* must be *voluntary*, in those Parts of their *Discourse*, which you say they utter of their own Head, and their own Will: Therefore here is a Demonstration that the whole may not be *supernatural*, because that Part of it which you your self cannot distinguish from God's Message, till another *Inspiration* teacheth you, is here acknowledg'd by your self to be *natural*; and the Effect of their own *Will* and their own *Power*. If therefore what you can't distinguish from God's Message, and his immediate moving their Organs, be certainly their own *voluntary* Action; then likewise is it possible that what you call the *Force*, *Impulse*, *Agitation*, of God's Spirit, may be only *natural*. I hope you will not say that *Almighty God* absolutely forceth them to utter, what it is his Will they shou'd not speak.

But, lest this should seem too strange, you have absolutely invented two *Precedents* for it: The one out of the *Old Testament*; the other out of the *New*. 1. You say the *Schools* of the *Prophets* under the Law seem to have been for training up the Sons of the *Prophets*, that they might bring their own Spirit to an entire *Subjection* to the *Prophetic Spirit*. To which I answer, that this is a Device of your own to solve your own wretched *Scheme*, without any the least Shadow of a Proof: And therefore that you seem to think too meanly of your *Neighbours*, if you imagine they will be impos'd upon by such a precarious, and groundless Piece of *History*, invented by your self. There is nothing to be replied to such *Prattle* (to use your own Word) but *Astonishment* and *Pity*, when we think that any can venture to advance *Inventions* of their own in such a *Cause*; which they will find it hard to answer for, another
Day

Day. But I suppose these *Schools* seem to you to have been instituted for this End, because it serv'd your present Purpose that they shou'd seem so. 2. The other *Precedent* you produce is the *Church of Corinth*, in which the *Apostle* seems to have laid down a *Rule* which serves your Purpose. If I shou'd answer that this seems not to be so to others, it wou'd be a sufficient Reply. But is this a tolerable *Vindication* of your *Friends*? Is it not certain that in the *Primitive Church* there were Persons who pretended to be influenced by the *Divine Spirit*, and were not? That to prevent the Mischief of this, some had an infallible Capacity of discerning the real from the Pretenders? Nay, were not all the *People* call'd upon to try and judge, and Rules given them by which they shou'd judge? And were not these sufficient Grounds for the *Rule* laid down by the *Apostle*, without supposing that any who had truly the *Spirit of God*, did, in the same continued Discourse, mix the Dictates of their own *Spirit* with *his*; and put them upon the *Auditory*, as *his*? which, again I must tell you, is an *Invention* of your own. Here therefore you acknowledge that these *New Prophets* frequently, in the same *Inspiration*, mix their own, or some other, *Spirit* with *God's*, thinking it to be *his*: And in Defense of this you allege nothing but a *Fancy* of your own; not giving one single Instance of any *True Prophet* who ever did the like: And if this do not shew your *Prejudice*, I know not what doth. But, Sir, all this time you seem to have forgotten your declar'd Design: which was to prove from our *Saviour's* Prediction of the coming of *False Prophets*, that there must be at the same time *True Ones*. Now I desire to know whether our *Lord* by *False Prophets* understood such as were truly sent of *God*, but yet, in the same *Inspiration*, mix'd their own, or some other, *Spirit* with *his*. If by *False Prophets* he meant such as these; then doth he command us to reject such as these; and consequently to reject those whom
you

you defend. If he means not such; then your *Argument* can signifie nothing to your Purpose: since by *False Prophets* you understand such as you will not give us leave to think, He understood. Again, you say, p. 8. The *False Prophets* in *Scripture* are such as you here describe your *Friends* to be: From whence I argue that the *False Prophets* of which we are forewarn'd by our *Lord*, and those of whom you speak, are the same: And consequently, it is our Duty to turn from them, as much as it is, to obey our *Lord*. This is sufficient in Answer to what you say of their mixing, in the same Inspiration, another *Spirit* with that of *Almighty God*.

I pass over what follows about the Possibility of the Appearance of *True Prophets* in these Ages; because I know no one who doubts of it: Only remarking, that the wonderfull Effusion of the miraculous Gifts of the *Holy Spirit* upon *Multitudes* in the first Ages, cannot be proved to be an insufficient Completion of the famous *Prophecie* of *Joel*; unless you will make it so literal as that every individual Man in the World must be understood in it: as indeed your *Arguments* do. For the *Probability* of the thing; I find you are forc'd to recurr to that *Reasoning* which you so injuriously decry upon better Occasions; or to Passages in the most obscure *Books* of the *Bible*: not being able to produce one single plain *Promise* or *Prediction* of our *Lord*, or his *Apostles*, which gives *Christians* any Ground to expect *Prophetical Warnings* in these latter Ages. I have observ'd already that *St. Paul*, and *St. Peter*, when they speak of *Christ's* coming, mention nothing of *Prophets* to forerun it, but appeal to the settled Rule, *The Day of the Lord shall so come as a Thief in the Night*; and prescribe the *Walking as Children of Light*, in all holy Conversation and Godliness, as the only Method of Force against the Surprise of that Day. And the *Midnight Cry* in the *Parable* shews the same, that we are to expect no *Prophetical Warn-*

ings; contrary to what you and your *Friends* confidently affirm. For it is a *Cry*, not *preceding*, but *accompanying*, his actual *Coming*; not a *Cry* of *Preparation* to engage those who were not before ready to prepare themselves; but only to call out those who were already prepar'd: as appears from hence, that it was of *Use* only to the *Wise Virgins*, who were always *ready*; not to to the *Foolish*, who wou'd have listen'd to the *Cry*, and would gladly have prepar'd themselves upon it, but that the time of *Preparation*, and *Conversion*, was past before this *Cry* came.

Thus much for the *preliminary Part* of your *Book*. I proceed now to consider more particularly those *Precedents* which, in the following *Parts* of it, you professedly urge from the *Holy Scripture*, in *Justification* of your *New Prophets*; which is my chief *Design*: That so we may judge, whether, in your *Zea* for your *Cause*, you have done *Justice* to the *Antient Prophets*; or to the *Ways* of *Almighty God*.

First, As to their *Agitations*; which you endeavour to defend from the *Examples* of the *Old Prophets*; without being able to produce one *single Instance*, as shall appear, to this *Purpose*.

i. You instance in the *Seventy*, constituted *Prophets*, *Numb. 11. 17.* and, that their *Propheying* was something of *Agitation* visibly appearing in their *Bodies*, you attempt to prove, not from any *Expression* looking that *Way*, but from *Joshua's* desiring *Moses* to restrain and forbid *Eldad*, and *Medad*; who, tho' not brought to the *Tabernacle* with the other *Seventy*, yet *propheied* in the *Camp*; i. e. had *Bodily Agitations*, without speaking for *Edification*, or *Exhortation*, or *Comfort*. p. 32. for had they done this, you argue, he would not have desired them to be restrained. *Excellent Reasoning!* but *that* I know you despise. *Joshua* desired these Men might be restrained. You know not the *Reasons* he had for this; tho' *Moses* saith it was out of *Envy*: Therefore it must be because they had

had *Bodily Agitations*: which, you say, consider'd by themselves, are call'd *prophefying* in *Scripture*. This is a Mistake. But the Point you ought to have proved was, that the *Seventy Real Prophets* had *Agitations*: For you are to produce Instances of *True Prophets* speaking in the Name of *God* under *Bodily Agitations*, and violent *Commotions*. This, you say, is probable, because *Eldad* and *Medad* had *Bodily Agitations* without speaking at all: And are said to *Prophefie*. Now all that is said of the *Seventy*, is, that they *prophefied*: Therefore this Argument, if it proves any thing, proves that the *Seventy* had no Sign of *prophefying* but *Violent Agitations*. For if by the *prophefying* of *Eldad* and *Medad* was meant nothing but *Agitation*; then the same may be said of the *Seventy*, of whom it is likewise said that they *prophefied*. But, to shew you how weak your Argument is, read the *Verse* following that, in which *Joshua*, out of *Envy*, would have had them restrained. You say, *Joshua* would not have desired this, had they spoken as *Prophets*, for *Edification*, &c. Now, in the first place, *Moses* tells us that *Joshua* spake out of *Envy*: Which he could not have done, had these Men been only *Agitated* in their *Bodies*. In the next place, That it was not merely *Bodily Agitation*, appears from *Moses's* Answer; implying that he would not forbid them; and expressing his Wish that all the *Lord's* People were *Prophets*: not surely that all might have *Bodily Agitations* only; but that all might be even like himself. You may see plainly that if young *Joshua's* desiring this *Restraint* be any *Argument* that their *Prophefying* consisted merely in *Bodily Agitations* without speaking; much more is *Moses's* refusing to restrain them an Argument that their *Prophefying* was not *Bodily Agitation*, but somewhat of so much Importance and Use, that he did not think best to restrain it. See therefore, from all this laid together, what a Proof you have brought here of *Bodily Agitations*.

ons, from a Place, in which there is not the least mention of them; and which it self confutes the Fact you would build upon it. But if you resolve to argue at the rate you do now, you may have proof enough of your Point; taking for granted the Matter in dispute, and resolving that wherever you meet with the Word *Propheſie* it ſhall ſignifie *Bodily Agitations*. But this doth not become a *Gentleman* who ſpeaks ſo much of *Critical Learning*. But, to proceed,

2. You inſtance in *Balaam*, who ſaw the *Vision of the Almighty*, falling into a *Trance*, &c. *Numb. 24. 2.* I know no one who ever denied that the *Prophets* were ſometimes in *Ecſtaſies*, and *Trances*; as *St. Paul*, and others under the *New Teſtament*. But neither is this any thing to your Purpoſe. For your proper Buſineſs is to produce *Prophets* who taught, as *Prophets*, under ſuch *Agitations*, as your *Friends* have. But *Balaam* ſpoke nothing of any *Agitations*, at all; but only of a præternatural ſtate of *Mind* in which the future Eſtate of the *Children of Iſrael* was, as it were, made preſent to his view. Nor was he in this *State* at the *Time* when he ſpoke. But it was paſt: And in his *propheſying* he tells (without any ſort of *Commotion*) the things which he ſaw in *that State*. How diſtant is this from our Purpoſe!

3. The *third Inſtance* is of *Sampſon*, of whom it is ſaid that the *Spirit of the Lord* began to move him at times, &c. *Judg. 13. 25.* which muſt be *Bodily Agitations*, you ſay, ſince we do not find that it mov'd him to Action. Now, I'm ſure, we do not find that it ever mov'd him to any thing elſe but *Actions* of great and marvellous *Strength* and *Courage*. I know not that he was a *Prophet*, or that he gave any *Prophetical Warnings*; or that the *Spirit* which mov'd him was ever accounted a *Prophetical Spirit*. But this we know, from the following *Hiſtory*, that every time it is ſaid that the *Spirit of the Lord* came upon him; it was for *Action*, and for nothing, but

to enable him for some stupendous Conquest: And from hence it is evident that by the *Spirit* of God's beginning to move him at times, is meant it's giving Prefages, in several Instances, of his *future* Strength, and Exploits. This *Spirit* must indeed appear in some sort of *Bodily Motion*, necessary to *Action*: But what this hath to do with your New prophetic *Spirit*, it is hard to judge; and I leave to you to make out. Your Business is to prove that God used to agitate the Limbs of his *true Prophets*: And you prove this by instancing in *one* who never pretended to the Spirit of *Prophecie*; but only to *Extraordinary Strength of Body*, when he was assisted by the *Spirit of God*.

4. The next Instance is taken out of 1 Sam. 10. 10, 13. where *Saul* met a Company of Prophets *prophesying*, i. e. say you, *having yet the Ecstatic Motions upon them*: and he prophesied likewise. Now this is taking for granted the very thing in *Question*; and arbitrarily, and without Proof, resolving that the Word *Prophecie* shall here signifie *Ecstatic Motions*. But will any one believe that these *Prophets*, exalted as they were, and elevated by the *Spirit of God*, said nothing all this time; but only were agitated in their Limbs? How unbecoming, how fruitless, a thing is this? The *Text* mentions no other Motion but that of *coming down from the High-Place*: But you add your own Invention to the *sacred History*, in which there is not one Word of any *involuntary Agitations* of their *Bodies*; and make the *Spirit of God* come upon *Saul* merely to agitate his *Body*; and this because you are resolv'd it shall be so. For if *Propheying* signifies in this place *Ecstatic Motions of Body*; here is a Company of *Prophets*, and *Saul*, possess'd by the *Spirit of God*, merely for the *Agitation* of their *Bodies*: Which is a very absurd Supposition. *Propheying* therefore certainly signifieth here the *speaking* by that *Spirit* which came upon them: Nor have you given the least Shadow of Proof of the contrary.

5. The next *Instance*, is of *Saul's Prophefying* when the *Evil Spirit* from the Lord came upon him. 1 Sam. 18. 10. Now any other Reader would interpret this of his *Speaking* according to, or by the influence of, that *Spirit* which then was upon him: For Persons inspired by *Evil Spirits* are in *Scripture* called *Prophets*; and their speaking by them is stiled *Prophefie*. This would be an easie Solution of this Place. But it doth not serve your Purpose: And so you give us a most incoherent Account of this Passage; and such an one as will not prove at last at all to the Honour of your Cause. 1. You say that this *Evil Spirit* was only a deep *Melancholy*; not any thing præternatural. 2. This *Melancholy* was so strong upon him, it made him walk about his House frequently, and do other involuntary Actions; (amongst which he thought his casting his *Javelin* at *David* would be reckon'd,) and agitated his Body after such a Manner, as the *Bodies* of *Prophets* were agitated, during the *Spirit's* being upon them: And that upon this Account only he is said to *prophefie*; or, as the *French Translation* expresseth it more to your Mind, to *act the Prophet*. Now pray, Sir, consider what a Piece of *History* you have here invented. Here is no mention in the *Bible* of these involuntary Motions, as *prophefying*s: Nor doth the *Author* of this *Book* pretend to give us those Particulars of *Saul's* Behaviour, which you, it seems, know perfectly well. Again, the *French Translation* will not at all help you: Nor is it of any *Authority*, if it would. For to *act the Prophet*, certainly rather signifies to *speake* after the Manner of the *Prophets*, than to resemble them in any lesser Circumstance: Nor can he be properly said to *act the Prophet*, who doth not at all *speake*, which was the chief Business of a *Prophet*; but only is *agitated*: Even granting that *Prophets* were sometimes *agitated*. Nay, the utmost you can say upon your own Principles is, that it is possible, that by *Prophefying* here may be meant

meant *Agitation*: But you can't deny but that speaking after a *Prophetical* Manner is possible, nay most likely, to be intended by it. This is your usual Fallacy, to take the thing for granted which is in Dispute. But, what is of more importance, please to observe what you have here advanc'd, viz. that *Saul*, by mere *Natural Melancholy*, without the help of any superior Spirit, acted the *Prophet*, or was moved and agitated involuntarily; (tho' you contradict this again by your owning his casting his Javelin to be *voluntary*;) and after such a Manner, as that his Behaviour was call'd *Prophefying*. From hence therefore I argue that Persons may have what you call *Prophetical involuntary Motions*, and *Agitations*, by the Force of Nature, under the Power of a distemper'd Mind; without the Assistance of any superior Spirit, whether good or bad. Now how much your *Friends* are oblig'd to you for this, I leave them to judge.

6. Another Instance of *Saul's Prophefying*, you also give us, out of 1 *Sam.* 19. 23. in which you only positively affirm over again, that by *Prophefying* is meant only being agitated in Body: And so again represent *Almighty God* as sending his Spirit upon a whole College of *Prophets*, *Saul's* Messengers, and *Saul* himself, for no other End, but the *Agitation* of their Bodies. It must be confess'd that we cannot at this Distance be suppos'd to know the Manner of *Prophefying* in these Colleges; nor the *Ends* it serv'd: But who, besides your self, would venture to affirm, without the least Ground, that all their *prophefying* was nothing but *Agitation*, without speaking as *Prophets*, either in praising *God*, or expressing his Will: Especially, when as yet you have not produc'd any Passage in which *Prophefying* signifies *Agitation*; unless we will take your Affirmation for a Proof, against Reason, and Circumstances?

7. The *Prophet David* is next produc'd; who indeed agitated himself, when he danc'd before the *Ark* of the

Lord. But that he was then under *Inspiration*; or that he so much as pretended to *Prophecy*; or that he was agitated *involuntarily*; as you affirm; is contrary to the *Story*: in which he is represented as doing it of *himself*, no more under *Inspiration* than those who shouted, and blew the Trumpet before it; and defending it, when he was blamed for it, by the greatness of the Occasion, and that he rejoiced thus before the *Lord*; and not by any impulse from the *Spirit of God*; which he might as well have mentioned for his own Vindication, had there been any. This Action of his is not call'd *Prophecy*; which is very much to your disappointment. But we see by this how unprejudiced you are in the *Cause* you maintain, when you can snatch at such a *Story* as this. Shew us, if you can, that *David*, when he acted the *Prophet* truly, and uncontestably, ever did it with *Agitations* at the same time. This only can serve your Purpose: But for this you have nothing to allege but that his *Heart was hot within him*, and *while he was musing, the Fire kindled*, and forced it self (as you have changed the Words) by his *Tongue*. p. 37. Whereas he saith, *at the last I* (not God) *spake with my Tongue*: an Expression which your *Friends* deny to belong to a true *Prophet*. This is all the *Agitation* you can find in him: And yet here is nothing but a great desire expressed of venting his Mind; and this in such a figurative Way of lofty Expression as any humane *Orator*, without the Pretense of *Inspiration*, might use. Nor indeed do I believe that you can so much as give the Shadow of a Proof that the *Tongues* of the *Prophets* were ever moved *involuntarily*, when they delivered their Messages, or *Inspirations*. For *God* always deals with them as with *Free Agents*. Some of them were permitted to contest their *Mission* with him. They always appear to do and speak as voluntarily as other Men: And generally are not under the *Inspiration* at the time they deliver it, but
report

report what the Lord hath said to them, or what the Lord hath sometime before directed, or commanded them to speak: Which is a Way entirely different from that of your *New Prophets*.

8. In defense of their *Agitations*, you urge that some *Prophets* cried out with a more than *ordinary Force*: And I know no one who denies it, when there was any Occasion for it. But what is this to the *Agitations* you are defending? No more than what you subjoyn, that *Elijah* ran before *Ahab's* Chariot. At which time he was under no *Inspiration*: Nor was he moved *involuntarily*; but only *assisted*, in what he did voluntarily, by the Hand of the *Lord* which was upon him.

9. The next *Instance* of these *Agitations* in the *Prophets*, you say, is that in 2 *Kings* 9. where *Elisha* the *Prophet* sends one of the Sons of the *Prophets* to anoint *Jehu*, p. 34. 35. in the Account of which, you give us a fresh Instance of your excellent Talent at making *Histories* out of your own *Brain*; and of your peculiar Method of Arguing. Your Business here, is to prove from the *Text* that this Messenger of the Sons of the *Prophets* had *Agitations*, according to the modern Manner. In order to this, you affirm that he transgressed the Order given him by *Elisha*; that the *Spirit* of the *Lord* came upon him; and that his *Agitations* preceding it were visible. And this is the Way in which you deal with the *Ho'y Scripture*: than which I know not whether we can meet with any thing more unaccountable. For, in the *History* it self, there is not one Word of the *Spirit* of the *Lord's* coming on him, which on such occasions is usually expressed; nor the least Shadow of any thing like *Agitations* preceding; (tho' what would this signifie, since all your *Prophets* speak *under*, and not *after*, their *Agitations*?) nor any thing to make us believe that he acted as a *Prophet* in his own Person, or as any thing more than the *Messenger* of *Elisha*. For
if

if he had been design'd by *Almighty God* to have acted as an inspir'd Person himself; his being sent by *Elisba* with his *Errand*, had been manifestly vain, and frivolous. But because there is something more in his *Message* than is expressly recorded, as said to him by *Elisba*, v. 3. therefore, I suppose, you will make *him* an inspired Person, upon this Occasion: When you must know that it is usual in *Scripture* not to record every Word in such a *Case*, when the Words are to be repeated immediately, as this *Message* is, v. 6, 7, &c. But, to shew you farther your *Error*, this Man himself calls what he says an *Errand* to *Jehu*, or a *Message* upon which he was sent: And delivers it all as such, after no other Manner than he would have done, supposing it only a *Message* from *Elisba*. But what arguing can be of any force against a Man who thus arbitrarily adds to the *Text*? It puts me in Mind of the Answer given by one of your *Friends*, when Mr. L. was taxed with fixing a *Word*, in one of his *Inspirations*, upon the Prophet *Isaiah* which was not in him; viz. that the *Word* was once in the *Original* and dropt out, and now restored by the *Spirit's* direction to Mr. L. And after this rate you may prove what you please from *Scripture*, and fix what you please upon the *Prophets*. But I must not dissemble that you have another Argument to prove that this *Messenger* was under *Agitations* as a *Prophet*; and that is, his being call'd by the *By-Standers*, *Επιληπτικός* (according to the Translation of the *Septuagint*, which must be followed, to be sure, when it serves a Purpose,) an *Epileptic Man*, that hath *Fits of the Falling Sickness*; for so, or like to that, say you, it did appear to them: From whence you think it plain that he had *Agitations*. Now it is manifest that, whatever they meant by this Word, and whatsoever their Intent was in giving him such a Name; the Persons who use this Word, did not so much as see his Behaviour: For v. 6. it appears that *Jehu*,
and

and He, were in private; and v. 11. That *Jehu* came forth to the Servants of his Lord: From which it is plain that they were not Witnesses to the Behaviour of this Messenger; nor present when he spake to *Jehu*, either as a Prophet, or as sent by a Prophet. The History likewise tells us that he was not inspired himself upon this Occasion; but was only the Messenger of *Elisha*, to deliver his Errand to *Jehu*: so that, upon your own Scheme, here is no Ground for Agitations. And from hence it appears that the only Reason those Servants had to give him that Name, was the seeing him come in such hast, and with such Eagerness; and immediately fleeing away as soon as he had delivered his Message to *Jehu*. But that they designed, by the Word they used, to call him a Man with the Falling Sicknes, is an Assertion wholly groundless and precarious, even your self being judge: Since they saw him not act the Prophet to *Jehu*; nor any Part of his Behaviour, but his coming and going in very great hast; which hath nothing in it like the Falling Sicknes.

10. The next is indeed an Instance very much to your honour, viz. that of the Prophets of *Baal*, who cried with a loud Voice, and leap't upon the Altar, and cut themselves with Knives: which you say is call'd their Prophefying, 1 Kings 18. 29. Where it appears indeed, that their calling upon *Baal* for so long a time is called Prophefying, from the Remark added, that no Answer was made to them; but not that their Agitations are so called. Nor doth it necessarily appear that they acted an involuntary Part. However, if they did, we know what Spirit possess'd them: and all that can be proved from hence is, that Prophets acted by an Evil Spirit have violent Agitations and Commotions of Body. But, on the contrary, we find *Elijah* not vying with these Prophets in Agitations; (in which they were likely to outdo him;) but calmly calling upon God, without any Commotion of Mind, or Body. The People,

People, according to you, might justly have suspected that the *Prophets* of *Baal* had a more powerful Spirit in them than *Elijah*. But it proved at last that his *small still Voice*, and *quiet Spirit*, was *Almighty God's*; and *their* boisterous and tumultuous Proceedings the Effects of a very contrary Spirit. And what your *Friends* will get by this *Instance*, I know not; unless it be an Advantage to their *Cause*, that they resemble the *Prophets* of *Baal*, much more than they do *Elijah*.

11. The *Description* you next give us out of *Jerem.* 29. 26. is not of *Real Prophets*; but of those *who make themselves Prophets*. These are called *mad*: And we have seen enough in later Ages to make us think it a just Appellation. But you have not given us yet *one Instance* of any *Established Prophet*, to whom the *People* were required to take heed, who was like a *Madman* in *Gestures*, *Motions*, or *Postures*; as you here express your self: And this at the time of his delivering any important Message from God; for otherwise your *Cause* will gain but little.

12. Now follows something which seems extremely to delight you, and yet wholly without Foundation. The *Septuagint*, it seems, translates the threatening of God to *Israel*, *Hosea* 8. 7. to import that *Israel* should be tormented, ὡς περ Προφήτης παρεξήσκηας ὡς ἀνδρῶν ὁ πνεῦμα πῶδες; like a *Prophet in an Ecstasy*; like a *Man carrying, or carried of, the Spirit*. Now, in the first place, you do not so much as pretend that this is agreeable to the *Hebrew*. In the next Place, we find it quite otherwise in all other *Translations*, except one. And in this *Translation* it seems evident that it must be understood of such *Prophets* as were *possess'd* and *agitated* by an *Evil Spirit*: Unless we can suppose that a *True Prophet* can come and tell the *People of Israel*, that they shall be afflicted and punished by God, as terribly as he afflicts and torments his own *True Prophets*; than which nothing is more absurd. Especially, since it appears that they could not but think the Condition of a *True Prophet* both
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happy and honourable. Can any one imagine that *Hosea* should come and tell *Israel*, God shall torment you, as He doth me, who am his *Prophet*? But I need not go any farther for a Confutation of this absurd Thought, than to the next Page, in which you tell us that your *Prophets* in *Ecstasy*, and under the most violent *Agitations*, have their Souls filled with Light and Joy; and acknowledge them to be exceedingly delightful. How therefore can you think that God should threaten *Israel* to torment them as a *Prophet* in *ecstasy* is tormented, that is, according to your self, to threaten them with a *Blessing*? To threaten them with Light, and Joy, and Delight? Doth God Almighty use to take his Representations of Misery, from what hath no Misery in it? Who would not wish to be thus tormented; if what you say be true? Thus you are so kind as to furnish us with a sufficient Answer to you; tho' we should not be able, at this distance of time, to give an exact Account of every thing, or every Word, with which a Man of your Learning can puzzle this Cause.

13. Nor shall *Jonas* escape: But he must likewise have his *Agitations*. And why? Because his *Preaching* had Effect: As we cannot suppose it would so soon have had, unless the *Ninevites* saw something extraordinary in his Manner, and particularly, *Agitations* in his Body. p. 36. By the same Argument any one may prove what they please of the *Prophets*; that *Jonah* came into *Nineveh* upon his Head, or the like: For there must be something strange in his Manner; and why not that, as well as any other sort of *Bodily Agitation*? I doubt not but he gave the People of *Nineveh* sufficient Proofs of his being sent by God. The Knowledge they might have of his having been wonderfully preserv'd in the *Belly* of a *Whale*, and thrown upon dry Land, was sufficient to allarm them into a *Work* which themselves seem to have thought necessary. By your Supposition you plainly allow that
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all the *Circumstances* of his *Conduct* are not recorded. If not; then it is a thousand times more probable, if you will go to *Invention*, that He did some *Miracle* visibly and openly before the *People*, than that he had *Fits* of the *Falling Sicknefs*; or any such *Behaviour*, as, you say your self, makes the *Speçtators* at first take Men for *Mad-men*, and not for *Prophets*. But it is manifest that they immediately took *Jonah* for a *True Prophet*: And therefore it is plain, there was nothing in his *Conduct* so shocking, and so like *Madnefs*, as you acknowledge these *Agitations* to be. But, without all this, how can you answer to *God* the using such *Arguments* as this; and adding, after this free Manner, to the Books of his *Prophets*? *St. Peter* converted *three thousand* at once. As you say, therefore, in the the Case of *Jonah*, let any one try amongst *Infidels*, whether he can do the like with the Words used by him. But doth it therefore follow that *St. Peter* had *Bodily Agitations*? You need not seek far for *Arguments*, to support your *Cause*, if your *Judgment* direct, and your *Conscience* permit, you to do it with such as these.

14. Not content with these *Instances*, you say that *St. Peter* expresseth as much, 2. *Pet.* 1. 21. viz. that *Holy Men of old spake as they were moved* (you change it into *forcibly carried*) by the *Holy Ghost*. Now it is manifest that *St. Peter* meant no more in that Place but that the *Prophets* of old were influenced in their *Minds* by the *Holy Ghost*; and that they spake agreeably to this *Internal Influence*: And therefore that none of their *Prophecies* are to be looked on as humane private *Conceptions*; but to be interpreted as the *Voice* of that *Holy Spirit*. Besides, the utmost that can be meant here, according to your self, is, that the *Spirit* forced them to speak what they did, and that they had not the *Command* of their *Tongues*. But what is that to those *Bodily Agitations*, concerning which we are speaking?

But

But that even this cannot be the meaning of the *Apostle*, I argue from that *Text* of *St. Paul* (here quoted, p. 36. and grossly misunderstood by you) *The Spirits of the Prophets are subject to the Prophets*; in which you would make him say only this, that their *Humane Spirits* ought to be *subject* to them; not that they can command their *Tongues*, or their *Bodies*, in their *Prophecys*. Now, 1. The Word *Spirits* must, in this Discourse of the *Apostle*, all along signify the extraordinary Communications of the *Holy Spirit*, not their own humane Minds. 2. Their *Gifts* of the *Spirits* are all along spoken of, as what could be regulated and managed by themselves. 3. This very Maxim is laid down in order to this Regulation: Particularly they are directed to *speak* after one another; to *Prophecy one by one*; to leave off speaking at such a particular time: And he assures them they may do this; that they can, if they will, thus manage themselves under the Influences of the *Spirit* which moved them. So groundless is it in you to say p. 8. that this Maxim is laid down to keep them from mixing their own *Humane Spirit* with the *Divine*; of which there is not the least Word in this Chapter: And so contradictory to the *Apostle's* Design is it for you to say that the *Bodily Members* of the *Inspired Prophets* are not at their command, when this Maxim is laid down on purpose to let them know that they might regulate their *Tongues*, and speak, and stop, as it should appear most for the *Order*, and *Edification*, of their *Assemblies*. If therefore, your Friends cannot possibly govern their *Tongues*; let them know that the *Spirit* by which they are moved is not the *Spirit* of the *Prophets*: For that is Subject to the *Prophets*; and doth not forcibly and irresistibly move their *Tongues*. *Jeremiah* might, as you urge, represent it as *Fire in his Bones*; and *Elihu*, as *Wine that hath no Vent*: Which are only figurative Expressions, signifying a great Uneasiness within them; but not
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any thing irresistibile moving their *Organs* of Speech; much less any other Parts of their *Bodies*. This appears from the Behaviour, both of *Elibu* himself, *Job* 32. 11, 12. who *restrained* the Spirit he is there speaking of, and kept in the very things he afterwards produceth, merely out of a Regard to Order and Decency; that he might not seem to think himself wiser than Men of greater Age and Experience: and of *Jeremiah*, who, in the Place refer'd to, *Ch.* 20. 9. had once resolved not to speak in the Name of God any more; which it is impossible he could have been so weak as to have done, had he known any thing of these *involuntary*, and irresistibile Motions. Nay, it is manifest that he did *forbear* for some time, from the Expression, *I was weary with forbearing*: And that all that he here intends is such an *Uneasiness* as determines a voluntary Agent to Action.

15. You go still farther, and venture to add to the *History* of the *New Testament* likewise, by affirming that the *Apostles*, on the Day of *Pentecost*, had *Bodily Agitations*: Otherwise, say you, the People could never have taken them for a Parcel of drunken Men. You had much better have said plainly, Otherwise our Cause cannot be served: For rather than that shall suffer, I see the *Apostles* themselves shall not be spared. And yet neither will this do: For, in order to vindicate your *Prophets*, you must prove that the *Apostles*, when they spake, or wrote, for the *Edification* of the Church, were under these violent *Bodily Agitations*, of which your *Friends* boast so much. This you don't so much as venture to insinuate: And indeed what you here pretend to, is a mere *Aspersion*, making the *Prophets* of God, like the *Prophets* of *Baal*. I wonder you did not, upon the same Ground, prove that the *Apostles* at this time were *Heart-sick*, and *Stomach-sick*, as your *Prophets* seem to be; and that they had the other *filthy* Signs of *Drunkenness*, accompanying this *Sickness*: For this appears full as plainly as what you say.

say. But to go still farther; a Man of your reading cannot but know that *Eli* thought *Hannab* had been drunken, merely because her Lips moved, but her Voice was not heard, 1 Sam. 1. 13. and a Man of your Parts might think it very possible for ordinary People, at first hearing, to think those drunken, who were talking what to them was unintelligible Jargon. But if you can give your self the Trouble, with all your Prejudice, to read the whole Story (*Act*. 2.) attentively, you will find, what you seem not to know at present, that to those *Foreigners* then at *Jerusalem*, who understood the Languages spoken, and conferr'd with one another upon this wonderful Occurrence, the *Apostles* had no Sign of *Drunkenness*. These Men were far from suspecting any such thing; as *They* likewise might have done, had they seen such *Bodily Agitations* as you would fix upon them: But acknowledged they heard them (not in Languages half-formed, not by abrupt Pauses, and indecent Eructations, but) speaking, in their several Languages, so as that they plainly understood them, the *Wonders*, or great things, of God. If you proceed to the 13. Verse, you will find that, not *these*, but *others*, who understood them not, hearing them sound forth what seemed gibberish to them, upon this Account at first said *They were full of New Wine*: In which hasty Aspersion, I say, *they* not joining who understood the Languages spoken, it is manifest they saw no Sign of *Drunkenness* in them. For if they had seen them reeling about, and agitated, as your unhandsome Supposition is; they were not so prejudiced in their Favour, as to have past it over, merely because they spake of God's Wonders, as many in *Drunkenness* are known to do. Add to this, that the *History* which speaks particularly of the rushing great Wind filling the House, v. 2. and of the Place where they were assembled being shaken, Ch. 4. 31. would not have past over in silence so remarkable a Circumstance as this, had they themselves

likewise been *shaken* and *agitated*. But enough of this, till you can produce some *Authentic Copy* which expressly mentions these *Agitations*; or some *New Revelation* to add your *Invention* to this Part of *Scripture*: as Mr. L. hath done to the *Prophet Isaiah*. Till you can do this, your positive *Affirmation* that it *must have been their Staggering or Reeling that made the People pass that Judgment upon them*, will serve to convince us of nothing, unless it be of your own *Prejudice*, and *Romantic Boldness*, in a very sacred and forbidden Instance.

Thus have you given the Reader, (if he will believe you,) a *Scripture-Account* of the *Agitations* which were constantly the *Attendants* and *Testimonies* of the *Presence* of the *Prophetic Spirit*: p. 37. Whereas it is evident, from what goes before, that you have given us nothing but your own *Inventions*; and not a single Instance of any one *Established Prophet*, who ever delivered any one important Message, under such *Agitations* as you are now defending; that, in order to prove your Point, you have shamefully, and not like a *Scholar*, in some Cases supposed, against manifest Proof, that *Agitation* is called *Propheying*, which is the taking the thing for granted which is to be proved; that in others, for want of Proof, you have unworthily added to the *Scripture-History*, your own *Inventions*; that in others you have grossly contradicted your self, and your own Principles: And that in all you have shewn your self above the *Rules* of *Criticism*, and *Reasoning*; and above the *Humility* which you so much preach to others in the handling the Word of God. And how shall we account for this in a *Gentleman* who pretends to an extraordinary Degree of *Learning*, especially in *sacred Matters*; and is so free in his *Censures* upon those, who, I doubt not, have it in their Power to shew themselves superior to him in the Cause they have undertaken. This may suffice in *Vindication* of the *Anti-*

tient Prophets, and Apostles, from the Imputation of their being *Precedents* for your *New Friends*, in their *Agitations*, and *Bodily Commotions*. I proceed

Secondly, to the *Prophetical Use of Signs*. Now that *Almighty God* did by his *Prophets* make use of several *Signs*, as well as *Words*, to express his *Will*, I know no one who denies. But I must add here *two or three* Observations upon this *Subject*. As,

1. It is evident that the *Reason* why *God's Prophets* ever made use of *Signs*, was because it was a thing customary, and agreeable to the *Genius* of those *Nations* in which they appeared: Great use being of old made by Men, as well of *Signs* in their *Actions*, as of *Parables* and *Fables* in their *Words*.
2. From hence it appears that neither *you*, nor any one else, ought to think and represent *that* as ridiculous, which we cannot be Judges of at this distance of Time; and which, tho' it be disagreeable to the *Genius* of the present Age, yet might be very well adapted to the *Ways* and *Manners* of the past. This is a *Rule* allowed of, in all ordinary *Cases*: And therefore certainly ought to be allowed of, in a *Case* of great and extraordinary Importance.
3. An Argument may be drawn from hence to make it probable, (if you will allow me to say so with all Humility,) that *God Almighty*, supposing him to speak to us by *Prophets*, would not make use of that Method, which yet was adapted to *others* of old; because the *Genius* and *Customs*, of *Nations*, in this Part of the World, are so extremely different from those of former *Nations* in the *Eastern*, and other Parts: As we find, likewise, the *Style* and *Manner* of speaking to be.
4. This may be confirmed, and I think, made even more than probable, from the *Genius* of the *Christian Religion*: which seems to have put a Stop to all *Enigmatical*, and *Typical* Representations of the *Will* of *God*; and entirely to have gone off, in the delivery of that *Will*, from such

Ways, as were in use amongst some of the *Old Prophets*. And 5. I must observe that it is a great Prejudice against your *New Friends*, who pretend to be *Christian Prophets*, that they are so entirely different, in this respect, from the *Methods* of *Christ*, and his *Apostles*. For you cannot produce any one Instance of an *Inspired Person* under the *New Testament*, (excepting that of *Agabus*, who was of an Inferior Rank of *Prophets*;) making use of such *Signs*: Much less delivering a Message of *Universal Importance*, or speaking to *Edification* or *Comfort*, (as you sometimes express the Business of a *Prophet*;) by *Signs* or *Representations*; God having manifestly chosen the most plain and useful Way of speaking by his *Messengers* under the *New Testament*.

Our Lord indeed doth upon several Occasions make use of *Parables*: sometimes for the just Punishment of those who had stood out against other Methods; sometimes for extorting a Confession of the Truth from his very *Adversaries*; sometimes to make the greater Impression (as it may be in particular Instances) upon the Minds of the Hearers. But how plainly hath he deliver'd his great *Message*; and that *Will* of *God*, which concerns the *Salvation* of Men? And in this, how plainly have his *Apostles* followed him? Nay, in what he predicts, whether concerning *Destruction*, or *Happiness*, he makes use of no such *Signs*, as the *Prophets* of old: Nor do any of his *Apostles* after him.

However this be; I dare say, your *New Friends* will never suffer in the Opinion of any considering Man, for any *Signs* used by them; if it can be proved from sufficient Arguments that they were commanded, or forced, by *Almighty God*, to use such Representations. By their *Shakings*, or *Agitations*, which are *general*, you say, *Almighty God* signifies that he is coming to shake terribly the *Earth*, &c. p. 43. But how unlikely a Matter is this, when you your self affirm that this was always the constant Attendant, and Sign of the Presence

Presence of the *Spirit* of Prophecy; on whatever Messages the Prophets were sent; whether of *Blessing*, or *Cursing*. For that *God* should make use of a *Sign*, to signify a peculiar Act of his Displeasure, which *Sign* these *Prophets*, according to you, would have had, tho' they had spoken of nothing but *Blessing*; and which they must have had, whatever their Message had been; and which they actually have, when they pronounce the greatest Blessings; will be incredible to all who understand the Nature of *Signs*, and have not cast off their *Reason* under the Pretence of *Humility*. Besides, we know that the *Prophets* spake of *God's shaking* the Kingdoms of this World; nay, we know that the *Apostles* spake of this same *Shaking*, not only the *Earth*, but the *Heavens* also: But we neither read that they made their own *Agitations*, or *Shakings*, the *Sign* of this; or indeed, that they had the least *Sign* of *Agitation*, or *Shaking*, about them. We have seen indeed, in these last Ages, another set of Men, before your selves, *agitated* in their Bodies; and denominated from their *Shakings*, and *Convulsions*, which have been equal, in many Instances, to those amongst you: But we have seen how groundless the Pretences to the *Spirit*, founded upon these *Agitations*, have been: Nay, it is to be hoped, they have, in great Measure seen it themselves. But, to proceed,

Thirdly, That the *Prophets* do sometimes represent *God* as speaking in his own Person, I know no one, who ever doubted: But all the *Instances* you have produced, p. 46. (the like to which you might have produced by *Hundreds* if you had pleased) come not up at all to the Manner used by your *Friends*: And consequently shew no Resemblance, in *this*, to the *Antient Prophets*. For tho' there be not immediately preceding these *Passages*, the *Form*, *Thus saith the Lord*; yet, if the *Reader* will please but to turn to the Beginning of the *Prophecies*, or of the Verses preceding these, he will be satisfied, that the *Prophets* did not speak these

Passages, at the very time when they were under the *Inspiration*, or *Vision*: But that they are Accounts given to the *People* of what had been formerly seen by them in *Visions*, or represented to their Minds by *Almighty God*; which they might make, without doing any Injustice to *God*, either in the *third Person*, speaking of him, or in the *first*, introducing him as speaking of *himself*, without the least Alteration of what was said to them. As in giving an Account of what any Man hath said to us, we perfectly, and equally, answer the Design, whether we retain the *first Person* in which he spoke; or use the *third Person* instead of it. But what is this to the justification of those, who under the *Inspiration* speak as *God* entirely: which is very different from the Way of the Antient *Prophets*; and much more from that of the *Apostles*, and *Embassadors* of *God* under the *New Testament*. Add to this, that the *Prophets* using the *third Person*, and speaking of *Almighty God* in the same *Prophecy* in which they speak in the *first Person*, is a Demonstration that they were not as *Pipes* thro' which *God* himself forcibly spake these very Words to the *People*; for then *all* must have been in the *first Person*: But that they were *Rational* Representers of what *God* had shewn to themselves; and free to chuse either the *third*, or *first Person*, as they saw fit. And of what Force can this be, towards the Justification of those, who by their own Profession are no more the *Prophets* of *God*, than so many *Trumpets* would be, thro' which *God* immediately speaks to the *Auditors*; and whose Words consequently ought always to be in the *first Person*: Tho' I know not how it sometimes comes to pass that your *New Prophets* forget themselves, and speak of *God* in the *third Person*. For, tho' the *Old Prophets* might, very consistently with themselves, use either the *first*, or *third Person*; because they pretended to no more, than to represent faithfully to their *Auditors* what *God* had signified to them: yet, it is highly absurd in your Friends, to use
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any but the *first* Person, because you pretend that God doth not signify his Will to them, to be represented by them to others; but that He himself immediately speaks to the *Auditors*, and forcibly makes use of their *Organs* to convey his own Will to them.

Fourthly, You proceed, p. 47. to *justify* from *Former Precedents*, their speaking, or rather, as you say, God's speaking to themselves, by their own Mouth. And for this you produce *Isai. 20. Jer. 36. Ezek. 3. Hosea. 1.* and you might, if you had pleased, have produced an Hundred more passages: only taking for granted the thing in dispute, after your usual Manner, that the Lord's speaking to the *Prophets*, is vocally speaking to them by forcibly moving their own Organs of Speech, and using their own Mouths, to speak to themselves. If you had been so disposed, you might have proved, from that *Chapter of Isaiah*, that God spake to *Isaiab* by the *Hand of Isaiab*, as it is in the *Original*, and not the *Mouth*: And you might with as much Justice have kept to the *Letter* of the *Text* in one *Case*, as in the *other*. For who, but one byas'd to this particular *Cause*, would not easily acknowledge, that by *God's speaking* to a Prophet, and by the *Word* of the *Lord* coming to him, is signified only his making known his Will to him; not the vocal pronouncing such and such Words? And who would not own, that in all *Cases*, where it is plain that *Words* were audibly pronounced, it is as plain that the *Person spoken to*, was not the *Person speaking*?

But I must not here forget to mention a new Instance, produced by a Patron of this *New Dispensation*, since the writing of this: *viz.* that of *Zechariah*, thro' whose Organs, we are now informed, an *Angel* spake to himself, because the *Hebrew*, which we translate *The Angel who talked with me*, may signify, *who talked in me*; *i. e.* if the *Context*, and *Common Sense* allow of it: For otherwise a possible, or usual, Signification of a Word is not to be taken. Now *Angels* are,

thro' the whole Scripture, represented as talking with Men, juſt as Men do with one another, with Bodies viſible, and with Organs of Speech proper to themſelves. And were the ſame Word uſed about a Man's talking with *Zechariah*, it would be full as juſtifiable to interpret this of a Man's talking *in* him, to him, thro' his own *Organs*; as it is now to interpret it ſo of the *Angel*: Since their Way of talking with Men, is ever represented as the Diſcourſe of Men, with diſtinct *Bodies*, and diſtinct *Organs* of Speech. 1^{ſt}. Therefore, this Interpretation is moſt abſurd, and unreaſonable. 2. It happens likewise unluckily, that the *Context*, duly conſidered, cannot poſſibly admit of it. For the whole is here represented as uſually. Nay, the *Angel* is represented as removing his Station more than once, *Ch.* 2. v. 3. 4. 1. 5. 5. Did he, I pray, leap *in*, and *out* of, *Zechariah*? Or, had he a *Body* and Bodily *Organs* of his own, thro' which he ſpake one Minute; and the next Minute had none, but was forced to make uſe of *Zechariah's*? He is represented as waking *Zechariah*, as one Man is waked by another. 4. 1. And what is more, he is called the *Angel* who talked in him, as much when he had removed his Station, as before, particularly, 5. 5, 10. If therefore that Expreſſion be uſed, when it is impoſſible he ſhould be *in Zechariah*; then the uſe of that Expreſſion cannot be the leaſt Proof that the *Angel* talked to *Zechariah*, *in Zechariah*. But this way of arguing is indeed a very ſad Proof of the readineſs there is amongſt you to break thro' all *Rules* of Decency; and to make Nonſenſe and Abſurdity of the *Holy Scripture* it ſelf for the ſake of your *New Cauſe*.

Thus much for *Zechariah*. And, as for theſe *Prophets* whom you have here alleged; it is ſo far from appearing that *God* literally and *vocally* ſpake by their Lips to themſelves, that it doth not appear at all that he did, at the time of *Revelation*, forcibly move their Lips to ſpeak thoſe things which related to others: What they do *vocally*

cally speak, not seeming to be spoken at the very time of *Revelation*, but after it, by way of Representation of what God had impressed upon their Minds before; tho' you indeed are pleased, (contrary to all Appearances from the Beginning to the End of *Holy Scripture*) to lay it down as taken for granted, after your usual Manner, that a Prophet is one, who speaketh not from any Impulse of the Matter upon his Mind, tho' ever so strong, but, whose Mouth and Tongue is over-ruled by a superior Power to speak that which doth proceed from his Lips. p. 76. I cannot imagine for what Reason: since it is fully sufficient to the Purpose of a Messenger, that the Matter of the Message be fully made known to him; nay, since in other Places you your self agree with Bishop *Stillingfleet*, who makes the Formality of a Prophet, to consist in the immediate Revelation of something to his own Mind, or Understanding. Now, according to your *New Definition*, a Person may be a Prophet thro' whom, without knowing any thing of the Matter, God reveals his Mind to others: And according to the other *Definition*, such an one cannot be a Prophet, no Revelation being made to his Mind; but the *Auditors* are the *Prophets*, the Revelation being made immediately to them; as immediately as Words can be spoken thro' the Pipe of that Person. So inconsistent are these two Accounts which you seem to agree to; tho' your *New Definition* is indeed most adapted to your *New Dispensation*.

Fifthly, The next Point we come to, is the interrupted Manner of speaking the Words of God, in Use amongst your *New Prophets*; so that the *Auditors* can't understand them, before a *Scribe*, who hath a better Knack, hath written them, and so reads them over again: In which you likewise pretend, that they bear some Resemblance to the *Antient Prophets*. And here we are ordered to throw off our Reason again, for fear we should be so audacious as to think so unworthily of God, as that he would speak, what he himself
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immediately speaks, plainly and distinctly; that those might hear and understand him to whom he immediately speaks. For it is *God* himself, you say, who speaks; and not these Men: and that *God Almighty* ever speaks with Design to be understood; and yet after such a Manner that his Words shall not be pronounced so as to be clearly heard; let him believe that dares believe any thing that may but serve his own Purpose. But the Answer to every thing is, *Who shall say to the Almighty, Why dost thou so? Who are judges of his Ways?* At which rate of arguing every *Absurdity* and *Ridicule* may come in time to be put upon us, for the Dictates, and Will of God: And this, because we are not sufficient Judges of all things relating to Almighty God. This indeed is certainly true, that his Ways in many things are far out of our Sight; nor can we possibly Judge of all the *Reasons* and *Ends* he hath in view: But what then? Doth it follow therefore that we must swallow every thing as his Prescription? Doth it follow that we are *Judges* of nothing relating to him? Why then doth he himself subject his Revelations to our Tryal and Judgment? Why doth he appeal to Mankind in some Cases? Certainly because he hath given them Faculties, able to judge whether such and such Appearances be truly worthy of him or not; and because their Reward lies, not in believing every thing to come from him; but in receiving as such only what appears to our best Reason to be truly worthy of him, or to have nothing in it truly unworthy of his Nature and Perfections; which are to be the Guide of this Judgment. But, I pray, how come you your self so frequently to forget your self, as to pretend to *reason* about the Ways of God; and particularly, p. 57. about the Reasonableness of expecting *Prophetical Warnings*, with great Positiveness and Assurance: even charging God with a Defect in his Love, if he should not send *Prophets* before the coming

coming of *Christ*; notwithstanding that we have from himself sufficient notice already for Preparation for that Day, and Assurance that it will come as a *Thief in the Night*? This I say to you, who have so much decried the use of Reason. But God Almighty never finds fault with it; nay, He requires it at our Hands by his *Prophets*, and by his *Son*. It is a *false* and *proud Wisdom*, disdaining every thing that is not agreeable to the *Maxims*, unjustly, and without Foundation, established by it, which he loves to confound. But a calm and unprejudiced Use of our best Faculties; an unprejudiced judging of the Truth of things, and Pretensions of Men, according to the best Light we have, and according to those *Notions* of his Perfections which *Reason* teacheth, is our indispensable *Duty*; and the throwing this *Reason* off, under what Pretense soever, leads to all manner of *Absurdity*, *Enthusiasm*, and, at last, must terminate in a general *Infidelity*.

You are pleased here to intimate that *Humane Institutions* only should be in Obedience and Conformity to the rational Rule of the *Apostle*, *Let all things be done to Edification*: Whereas you would hide from the *Reader* that the *Apostle* is there regulating the Matter of *Divine Inspirations*, and the Manner of Behaviour under them. And since he argues there, That *God is the God of Order, not of Confusion*, he certainly allows us to be Judges of *Order*, *Regularity*, and *Edification*; and enforceth it upon all *Prophets*, not only as a thing always in their Power, but always their Duty, that *Order* and *Edification* be the Rule of their speaking and prophesying. But it is not enough for you to misrepresent this Rule of the *Apostle*: You go on to shew, most learnedly and judiciously, that some of the *Prophets* had *Amanuenses* to write for them. So have many *Divines* now: And yet their *Auditories* neither hear, nor understand them, ever the worse for that. But the Point here was to shew
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that any of the *Prophets* of old, when they pretended to speak the *Inspirations* of God, ever did it with *Errations*, and *Interruptions* in their Voices, so as that those to whom they were speaking could not hear, or understand, the Words spoken. But when, instead of this, you tell us that, in penning down their *Prophecies*, they made use sometimes of *one* to write for them, it sheweth us, not only that you have indeed forsaken all Regard to *Humane Reason* yourself; but that you think all your *Neighbours* likewise have discarded *Common Sense*, to be capable of being imposed upon by such Shadows of *Argument*.

The following Pages, to p. 55. are taken up, in proving that God cannot suffer honest Christians, who heartily pray to him, to be deluded, &c. by which Argument you may prove *Contradictions* to be true: unless you will suppose that no one in this Nation, is truly honest, and doth truly depend upon God, but your selves who believe in this *New Dispensation*. For if there be honest *Christians*, who do heartily depend upon, and pray to God, both amongst those who believe in it, and those who do not; then, according to this Way of reasoning, it must be true that it is of God, and it must be true likewise that it is *not* of God. But if both cannot be true; then are there some such Christians, on the one Side, or the other, in a *Delusion*: And consequently your Assertion is false. Nay, if you will not believe that *Almighty God* will suffer you, who do truly seek him, to be so deluded as to take that for his *Inspiration* which is not; how can others believe that he will suffer *them* to be so deluded as not to lead them to the Acknowledgment of his Hand in this Matter, when they make it their Business to attend upon him, and pray him to lead them into all important *Truth*? For it is as great a Crime not to believe in that *Dispensation* to which he plainly attests, as it is to believe in what he doth not truly attest to.

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And therefore, if he may suffer as good *Christians* as any are (which you cannot deny) to be so deluded as not to believe in this *Dispensation*; why may not he suffer *others* to be so deluded as to believe in it, supposing it not to be from him? The *Case* is equally reasonable, or absurd, on both sides. Besides, by this Way of arguing, if there be but one of these good *Christians* who believes any *Dispensation* to be the immediate Hand of God; this is Ground enough for all the World besides, who believe him to be a good Christian in other respects, to embrace the same Belief, without trying the *Spirits*, or being at any Trouble: For as sure as God is, (say you, with an Ayre of Assurance peculiar to some sort of Persons,) such a *Christian* cannot be deluded. That God will suffer a truly honest *Christian*, who constantly depends upon him, to be eternally lost, thro' any failure in his Brain, I can by no means think. But that God will preserve such an one from all Errour, and especially in Cases in which *Imagination*, and *Constitution*, bear a great, and perhaps to him an irresistible, Sway, I see not the least Shadow of Reason to believe: And most absurd are the Consequences of such an Assertion. It is not hard, I see, to your self to conceive that God should suffer Mr. *Mason* to be so influenced by a Notion, with which he had possess'd his Judgment, as to come to have his Judgment totally disordered by it, p. 54. Now what is this, in other Words, but to suffer him to be deluded? Tho' you say it was not *Delusion*, but something else. But was it not a manifest *Delusion*, or a partial Distraction, before his total *Distraction*? Did not God, in his Case, suffer a good Man to be as fully convinced of the Truth of what was false, as you can be of your *New Dispensation*? And is it any more unjust in God (of whose Ways I see you your self will dare to judge, when you can make your own Use of them) to permit some honest *Christians* to be partially distracted, than to suffer others to be totally so; without

out making it the Ground of eternal Damnation to either of them? And of this *partial Distraction* there are many and frequent Instances in the World: I mean, of a disturbed Judgment, and a disordered Brain, as to some particular Points, without the least Sign of the same Unhappiness, as to *others*; and this in such sort, that if *these* be not touched upon, all things appear to be perfectly right within.

I pass over the following *Pages* from the 55th. to the 75th. because there is nothing in them which either affects the *Old Prophets*, or is intended absolutely to justify your *New Friends*: They being spent in discouraging of the *Coming of Christ*; and the Warnings which you suppose must precede this; and some other personal Matters of no great Concernment to the Point I have undertaken, which is to consider the *Imputations* you have laid upon the *Old Prophets*, and the *Arguments* you offer from thence to prove that the Warnings we lately have had, are the *Warnings of God himself*.

I should now proceed to the *Account* you give us of the several sorts of *Predictions* amongst the *Old Prophets*, were I not a little stopp'd by what you tell us p. 77. viz. *That the Spirit of God made the inspired under the Gospel, 1. Cor, 14. speak, or pray, in unknown Tongues, which they could not interpret, i. e. according to your Meaning in this Place, which They did not understand, when themselves spake them. For I cannot forbear to take notice, as I pass, of this your great Mistake, into which your Zeal for your New Friends hath hurried you. And 1. It is very unworthy, and very absurd, for you to say that the Spirit of God made these Persons speak in unknown Languages, unintelligible either to others, or themselves; when it is plainly St. Paul's Design in this very Place to engage them not to speak in these unknown Languages. 2. It is very evident therefore that the Organs of these Persons were not forcibly and irresistibly moved; but that*

that the Management of them was left to their own Discretion and free Will. 3. It doth not appear that they were *inspired* at the time they spake; but only that they had the Skill, the habitual Skill, of speaking in strange Languages conferred upon them: For they used this to an ill Purpose blamed by the Apostle. 4. The *Apostle* himself could speak with *Tongues* more than them all; and without doubt *understood* them: And yet argues as if he himself might speak, or pray without *his Understanding* (as the Word is in our Translation) if he would: From whence it is plain that something else is meant by *unfruitful Understanding*, than the Person's not *understanding* what himself said. As it is likewise, 5. plain from many other Passages in this *Chapter*, that the Person speaking might himself be edified, v. 4. and consequently understood what himself said; that it was the *other*, the *Auditor* only, that was not *Edified*, and this by not being capable of understanding what was spoken; and that the Case of the *Auditor* is all along distinguish'd from the Case of the Speaker. 6. How unlike is all this to the Case of our *New Inspired*, who pretend to the miraculous Use of *unknown Tongues*? For they have them only by Piece-meal, and sometimes by Half-Words; they cannot use them, or not use them, as they see fit; but are actuated and forced into the Pronunciation of them; and often know not in the least what they say themselves; Differing in all these Circumstances from St. *Paul*, and others, who had the Knowledge of Languages imparted to them at the Beginning of the Christian Dispensation. But I come now,

Sixthly, To consider what your *New Cause* hath led you to say, upon the several sorts of *Predictions* you mention, as in use amongst the *Antient Prophets*; and the several Failures you have pretended to fix upon them: Which is a material and principal Point,

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I. You begin with such sort of Promises, or Threatnings, as are fulfilled in a Sense different from that in which those, to whom they were made, did understand them. As,

1. *Gen. 2. 17. In the Day that thou Eatest, thou shalt surely die.* Now how you can tell that our first Parents did not Understand this, as God meant it, if they had any Notion at all of *Death*, I cannot imagine. But however, the design of Almighty God was, not that they should accurately understand what was the exact meaning of the Threatning; but, that, by the *Threatning* Understanding something very terrible, they should be kept in their Obedience. Nor did the *Devil* speak any more Truth in what he said contrary to this, than in his telling them that they should be as *Gods, knowing good and Evil*. When God fulfils his Word, in the Sense most worthy of himself, there is not the least Failing: And therefore to allege such Instances as this, can justify no sort of Failures; because here was none.

2. God assures *Abraham, Unto thee will I give this Land*; 3. He promiseth *Jacob, I will surely bring Thee up again, out of Egypt*. 4. He promiseth *Phinehas the Covenant of an Everlasting Priesthood*. And these, tho' you are pleased to affirm the contrary, I doubt not, were all understood, as they were fulfilled.

For, as to the 2. Why should we not think that *Abraham* understood the Promise of *God* to be made to his *Posterity*, and not to himself? We don't find that any Complaints were made by him of any Failing on *God's* part. Nay, it is very evident that he did so understand them, from a great Number of plain Passages; so plain that they ought to be produced here, to shame your Prejudice, or your Blindness, in thus dark'ning the Ways of *Almighty God*. For the whole Procedure plainly shews that the Promise was meant to his *Seed*; and that He so understood it. *God's Promise, I will give Thee this Land, in the*
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ingular Number, is very often explained by the Addition of the words, *To thy Seed*. And that it was usual to use the Word *Thee*, when it was impossible to mean any thing by it but, *Thy Posterity*, and to speak of a whole Family under the Name of the *Head* only, needs no Proof. In this very Story, *Ch. 17. 2. God saith, I will multiply Thee exceedingly*, where nothing can be meant, but that God would Multiply *Abraham's Seed*, or *Posterity*: Yet you may perhaps imagine that *Abraham* might understand that *God* meant to multiply his *Person*. But this is not all. For whereas you represent the Case most fraudulently, as if nothing more had been said to *Abraham*, but that *God* would give him the Land; on the contrary, the Promise was often explained so that He could not mistake it. *Gen. Ch. 15. The Land promised was the Land then in possession of other great and mighty Nations; by the Dispossession of whom only, it could be free for his Possession. God gives him an Account, that his Seed was to be afflicted four hundred Tears in a Strange Land, V. 13. that after this they should be brought out of that strange Land; v. 14. that He himself should die in Peace, i. e. before that Calamity, and untouched by it, v. 15. that after that long Calamity, his Seed should come to the promised Land, v. 16. nay, that the Possession could not, according to the Laws of his dealing with Nations, be transferred in his Days from the present Inhabitants, because their Iniquities were not yet full, so as to deserve that Excision, by which his Posterity were to arrive at the Possession. What can be plainer? And, v. 18. the Covenant, or Promise, is solemnly ratified in these Words only, Unto thy Seed have I given this Land: and then the Nations are particularly reckoned who were the present Possessors, and who were not to be dispossessed in 400 years time, v. 16.*

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And is here any room to imagine that *Abraham* could possibly understand this Promise to be made to himself, that he in Person should possess all the Land possessed by these Nations, after the Explication of the whole Procedure? Nay, that He understood the Promise of all that Land to be made to his Posterity, not to himself, is evident from *Ch. 24. 7.* where He quotes the Promise in these Words only, *Unto thy Seed will I give this Land.* Not but that *Abraham* himself had as much as he could desire for himself; and was looked upon by his Neighbours as a *mighty Prince amongst them*, *Ch. 23. 6.* which differs very much from your Representation of the Case.

3. The like must be said in the Case of *Jacob*; that it was as plainly signified to him, and understood by him, that God's Promise, *I will bring Thee up again*, viz out of *Egypt*, referr'd not to his own coming up alive. For *Gen. 46.* the whole Procedure is explained to Him. *v. 3.* God promises He will make of *Him* a great Nation in *Egypt*. Where by *Him* is meant, his Posterity, his Children then in being, for *He* himself had none after this: Which shews this way of speaking to be too usual to be misunderstood. *v. 4.* in which the Promise of bringing him up again is made, it is added, *Joseph shall put his Hand upon thy Eyes*, i. e. shall do the last Offices for thee; Thou shalt die in *Joseph's* Sight: than which nothing could be a plainer Declaration to him, that he himself should die in *Egypt*, where *Joseph* was settled. Accordingly, when He had seen *Joseph*, he saith, *v. 30.* *Now let me die*; which he would not have said, had He expected a living part in that Promise. *Ch. 47.* He desires to be carried Dead, and buried in the promised Land. *Ch. 48. v. 4.* He explains the Promise of the promised Land, and declares it to belong to his Seed, and *v. 21.* He explains the promise of bringing him up again to belong to his Posterity. *Behold, I die: But God shall be with you,*
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4. For the Case of *Phinebas*. A Man of your Learning cannot but know that by an *Everlasting Priesthood*, could be meant nothing, in the then common Acceptation of the Word, but a very long one; and this either with, or without, an Interruption: as it was indeed very long in that Family, after a very short Interruption. The Covenant of Possession of the promised Land, made to the Seed of *Abraham*, was an *Everlasting Covenant*, and Gen. 48. 4. for an *Everlasting Possession*. Yet was it frequently interrupted, and now hath been so for a great Number of Years. Besides, that you know it was always understood that these Promises of Blessings to *Nations*, or *Families*, were generally under Condition of Obedience, and Regard to *Almighty God*: And no Failure was ever charged upon him, when the Failure was in the Conditions required. The Promise to *Phinebas* declared *God's* gracious Intentions towards him, and his Family. But there is no doubt, that *he* and others at that time understood it as it was fulfilled: As it is evident likewise that it was fulfilled exactly as it was reasonable to understand it. Nay,

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you might as well have argued, that it was not *Everlasting* in the *Philosophical* Sense; and that the Promise being made to the Person of *Phinebas*, (as you say it was to *Abraham* and *Jacob*,) God failed in not granting to him himself an *Everlasting Priesthood*. But indeed these are very poor Observations: And it is manifest that these *Promises* were fulfilled as they were at first, and as they ought to be, understood. Nor have you any Reason to say otherwise, but that it may a little puzzle the Cause you are upon.

5. The Case of *Josiah* being kill'd in Battle, tho' the *Prophets* assured him he should die in Peace, (2 Chron. 34. 27, 28.) is something, at first Appearance, more to your general Purpose: And therefore deserves to be considered. And 1. The Enquiry made of the *Prophets*, was only concerning the general Calamity threaten'd to the whole Nation, on account of *Idolatry*, and other Sins. And therefore the Answer cannot reasonably be extended to deliverance from all Evils, but from those of that Calamity only; importing that it was God's gracious Design towards Him, that he should have no part in it. This was what He enquir'd after: and there is no reason in the World why the *Prophets* should be supposed to answer about any thing but this. But, 2. supposing this should be a more large and comprehensive Declaration of God's kind Regards, and gracious Intention, to preserve him from other Evils, as well as from that Calamity: yet no such Promise as this doth in the least imply init, that God will do this, whether the Man will or no; but always supposeth that all necessary Prudence be found on his Part; and that he joyn his own Endeavours with God Almighty for his own preservation. Now *Josiah* runs himself into Danger unnecessarily; unprovoked; nay, after repeated Warnings, as from God himself. Doth any one, or did any one, ever think, that God Almighty's Promise to preserve a Man, sup-
poseth

poseth that he will do it against the Man's Will? St. *Paul* understood this Matter quite otherwise, who, tho' he was told by an *Angel*, that not one Life should be lost in the Shipwreck, yet declared that unless humane Help were used, they could not be saved. *Acts* 27. 31. So the Promise here, in the utmost Extent of it, only declares the merciful Intention on *God's* Part, which can have effect only upon Supposition that no mad and wilful Imprudence on the *King's* Part prevent it. In none of these Instances therefore is there any thing to justify any *Failure* in *Prophetical Messages*. If any Person misunderstand a Promise, they must answer for it: But it doth not appear in any of these Cases, but that *Almighty God* exactly fulfilled the Import of his *Threatnings*, or *Promises*; and was rightly understood by the Persons concerned. Or if *Josiah* argued weakly from the *Promise* made to him; and upon that reasoning, ran himself into Danger; this no more affects the Veracity of *God*, than if he should suffer a sincere *Christian* to sin grossly, who should run himself into great Temptation, upon Presumption that *God's* Grace would be sufficient for him, because *God* had promised it should.

II. You next come to other sort of *Predictions*, *promissory*, and *minatory*: p. 80. in which you, and all are agreed, that *Conditions* are always understood, or expressed: As *God* himself hath declared, *Jerem.* 18. This the *Ninevites* plainly understood, that *Repentance* would save them; else it had been the highest Absurdity for them to have set about it: contrary to what you here affirm. This *Jonah* himself knew: And this made him so unwilling to undertake an Office which some wicked Men might deride him for, when they should see the City still standing. The rest of your Descant, upon this, is all your own Invention. And tho' we can't account for all *Jonah's* Reasoning, or Behaviour;

yet it is plain that the *Repentance* of the *Ninevites* was a public, solemn, outside Shew, as well as an inward Resolution of Change. But why *Jeremiah* should here be brought in, as complaining on this *Head*, of *God's* Failures, when he is the very *Prophet* by whom *God* proclaims how his *Promises* and *Threatnings* are to be understood, is very strange. He might be derided perhaps by some, because the *Evils* he spake of did not immediately come, even before he said they would come: But he could not surely be derided by any, because a true *Repentance* had kept off the *threatned Evils*, when he himself assured them from *God* that it would do so. *This Case therefore admits of the easiest Solution*, as you say, because here is no Failure on *God's* Part: nor any Blemish upon the *Prophet*, if the thing promised do not come to pass, when the Persons concerned come not up to the Condition of the Promise; or if the thing threatned do not come to pass, when the Persons concerned come up to the Condition required in order to the preventing it. But I desire to know of you, under this *Head*, if *Public Calamities* are threatned over and over again, and the time precisely and frequently set; and no Alteration intervene; no such *Faith*, or *Repentance*, be seen as is required by those who predict these *Evils*; nay, the Want of these still as much complained of as ever, by the *Predicters*; and yet no such *Predictions* come to pass: what must we think of such *Prophets*, especially when they have frequently spoken of these *Evils*, not only as *Judgments* upon *Sinners* and *Unbelievers*, but as *Attestations* to their own Mission? I should here dismiss this *Head*, but that you have pick'd out a *Case*, not to be solved, if we will believe you, without throwing off all Pretences to *Reason-giving*: And yet, in my poor Opinion, there is not a clearer *Case*, or

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one left to your Purpose, in the whole *Bib'le*. *Hezekiah* being sick, *Isaiah* comes and tells him from the Lord, *Thou shalt die, and not live*, or, as the LXX read it, *Thou art a dying Man*; (not a dead Man, as you express it.) Now, (if it may be thought consistent with *Humility* to consider the whole of this Matter, and not to think it praiseworthy to believe any Contradiction concerning *Almighty God*;) I would affirm that here is no *Threatning* in the Case, but only a Message, or Declaration to him, that his *Disease* was past humane Cure, and of such sort, that no Hopes of Recovery were left: as an infallible *Physician* might have said to him, you are certainly dying of this *Distemper*. Thus it is plain *Hezekiah* understood it, and not as a peremptory *Threatning* that he should die: Otherwise it had been the absurdest thing possible for him to have thought of preventing his Death. But he applies himself to God, and not to humane Art; and God interposeth, and adds to his *Life*: Which shews sufficiently how he understood the *Prophet*. And thus methinks you your self might have explained it, since you rightly observe, p. 83, 84. that some *Prophecies* refer'd only to the Series of Causes in the World, according to which the Events would follow, if God himself did not interpose. But here your repeated Scorn of *Humane Reasoning* in general, makes me put you in Mind that *Humility*, and the Use of Reason, are perfectly consistent: And that if some People had a little more of both, they would not bring an Odium, and Disrespect, upon the *Holy Scriptures*, by representing the Ways of God as not to be judged of according to the Rules of *Humane Truth*, and *Justice*: as if *Revelation*, and even the best Reasoning, were at irreconcilable Enmity with one another.

III. Next follow your Thoughts upon what you call *Decisive Predictions*. But I desire to reserve the last Place for *them*, and to consider here the strange and unaccountable *Doctrine* you have taught the World about your *Fourth* sort of *Prediction*, which you call an *Arbitrary one*, p. 84. in which you say, *tho' the Prophet be a true Prophet, yet is it the internal Purpose of the Almighty, for wise Reasons, that the Matters of it predicted shall certainly not come to pass*. Of this you say we have diverse Instances in *Scripture*: But you are not so kind as to pretend to give us more than *three*; and these I shall now examine. 1. The *Prophets* of *Ahab*, who persuaded him, as from the *Lord*, to go up to *Battel*, come under this Head. Now, 1. It doth not appear that these were *Prophets* ever inspired by the true God; in the Sense in which we now understand the Word. They were 400 in Number: Doth any one think that there was such a Number of Persons at that time, to whom the *People* were obliged to attend? or such a Number of Persons who were properly the *Prophets* of the *Lord*: when *Elijah*, in the Reign of this very *Ahab*, had declared himself the only one left, 1. *Kings*. 19. 10, 14? 2. They are called *Prophets* indeed: And so are all who pretend to speak in the Name of the *Lord*. But they appear to have been *Professors*, and *Pretenders* only, whom *Ahab* loved and often trusted, because they flattered him, and made it their Business to prophesy good concerning him: And therefore they are called *Ahab's* *Prophets*, v. 21, 22. not the *Prophets* of the *Lord*. And thus *Jehoshaphat* understood them to be: as is plain from his not depending upon them; but calling for a *Prophet* of the *Lord*, v. 7. whereas these are called *Prophets* only, v. 5. And it seems very probable that, in that State in which God often sent true *Prophets*, there might be many, as well

well of those who had the preparative Education in the *Schools* of the *Prophets*, as of *others* who were no Disciples of *True Prophets*, who set themselves up for *True Prophets*, and acted their Part as well as they could; who yet were never the *Prophets* of the *Lord*, or inspired by him. And by such as these God often complains that both *Kings*, and *People*, were frequently misled. But, 3. here is not the least Proof that these *Prophets* had ever before been owned by *God* as his *Prophets*: But it is plain that they had likewise heretofore been contradicted in their Flatteries of *Abab*, by *Micaiah* the *Prophet* of the *Lord*, v. 7. who always prophesied *Evil*, but *Truth*, concerning *Abab*. 4. These pretended *Prophets* therefore, upon whom *Abab* often unreasonably relied, for the sake of their *Court-flatteries*, against the Testimony of *God's Prophet Micaiah*, God did permit a *Lying Spirit* to possess, in a signal Manner, for his deserved Punishment; yet in Mercy at the same time inspiring his true *Prophet* to tell him the *Truth*, if he would attend to it. 5. So that what is this Instance? It is an Instance of *God's true Prophet*, inspired with *Truth*, which the *Event* justified; and of *Abab's Prophets*, (who never were *God's Prophets*, as far as appears, but always false Flatterers,) inspired with a *Lying Spirit*. 6. *Micaiah* expresseth himself in a figurative, visionary, or poetical Manner: But all that was meant by his Account was, that God thought fit that *Abab* should be destroyed; and this by Means of those *False Prophets*, whom he had often preferr'd before *God's Prophets*: and that he permitted a *Lying Spirit* to do the Business. The same Account is given of *Satan's* appearing amongst the *Sons of God*, and undertaking to debauch *Job* from his Integrity; and of *God's* permitting him. But would any one say that *God* bore an active Part
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in the wicked *Design* of the *Tempter*? So is He represented by *Micaiah* as permitting an *Evil Spirit* to follow its own Inclinations in seducing *Ahab*. And this a Man of your reading must know, (nay 'tis what you put us in mind of sometimes, particularly, and very remarkably, p. 33. which I recommend to your own perusal;) that in *Scripture* all Events are ascribed to the *Lord*; and things which he only *permits*, represented sometimes as his Decree, and his Will. 7. What is here therefore of an *Arbitrary* Proceeding? Of an *Event* not answering the *Predictions* of any of *God's Prophets*? *Micaiah* was *God's Prophet*: And the *Event* answered his Words. *God* inspired him with *Truth*, even when he had a Mind to destroy *Ahab* by *Falshood*: But *Ahab's Prophets*, Pretenders only to *Divine Inspiration*, are by a *Lying Spirit* inspired with *Falshood*. How plain, how easy, how natural, how reasonable, is all this Proceeding on *God's Part*? and how resolved doth he shew himself to leave no such Failures, no such Marks of *Imposture*, upon his own true *Prophets*? Thus much for your grossly mistaken Instance of *Ahab's Prophets*.

2. What you here lay upon Almighty *God*, is, you say, agreeable to what *God himself* tells *Ezekiel*. 14. Ch. 7. and this you make your second Instance of *Arbitrary Prophecy*. This is a Case indeed, in which *God* speaks of deceiving a *Prophet*: But not of his forcing any to speak a false Message. And this not of his own *True Prophets*; not of those who are influenced by *himself*, and guided by his Rules, and particularly by the Rule here laid down: as appears from the Place. For, 1. By *God's* deceiving the *Prophet* is plainly meant, according to the usual Way of *Scripture Expression*, his resolving to permit that the *Prophet*, who is willing to give favourable Answers to any *Idola-*
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trous Israelites, shall be overruled by some *Lying-Spirit*, and governed by some *Egregious Delusion*, in order to the greater Punishment both of *Prophet*, and *Inquirer*: As you know from your own Observations, p. 33. that a signal and exemplary *Delusion*, or *Deception*, may be called a *Deception* from the *Lord*. Thus it might be said of a *Great incorrigible Sinner*, who hath deserved it, that God will lay more Stumbling-blocks in his Way to seduce him; when in Truth this is only meant, that he will give him over to his own wicked Heart, and to the Temptations of the Devil: As God is said to harden *Pharoah's Heart*, as a Punishment, only by doing or permitting what would have that Effect, thro' his own Fault: And, to give a yet stronger Instance, as God himself is said to move *David* to a great Crime, 2 Sam. 24. 1. only by permitting *Satan* to move him to it, to whom the active Part is expressly attributed, 1 Chron. 21. 1. These Expressions were plainly thus intended, and thus rightly understood by the *Antient Jews*: And you your self can so understand them, when it serves your own Purpose. 2. That the Crime of the *Prophet* deserving this, was a voluntary, wilful Crime; and not the speaking what he could not help, but was forced to speak even by God himself; (as you would insinuate;) is evident from what follows, that the Punishment of the *Prophet* should be even as the Punishment of him that seeketh unto him, v. 10. which you hide from your Reader; but which will plainly convince him that this cannot relate to God's true *Prophets*: especially if, according to your Notion of them, God himself speaks forcibly thro' them without their bearing any Part in it. For what Room then for so severe, or indeed any Punishment at all, for their speaking what they could not help speaking? The deceived *Prophet* therefore, being here threatened with

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as severe a Punishment as the *Idoltrous Enquirer*, the *Crime* of the *Prophet* here must be as wilful and voluntary, as of the *Enquirer*; and cannot be merely the speaking a Falshood, which, according to you, he cannot help speaking. 3. All this relates to that one particular *Case* of *Idoltrous* Persons coming to enquire, concerning the *Lord*, of *Prophets* professing to speak in his Name: And in this *Case* only He layeth down the *Rule* for all, both *People*, and *Prophets*, to govern themselves by. And therefore supposing it possible for God to bear an active Part in *deceiving* a *Prophet*; yet, it being declared in this one *Case* only, it cannot possibly be extended to any *Case* but this: Much less ought it to be represented as the ordinary way of *God's* dealing with the best of his own *Prophets*, and in those *Messages* to which the *World* is summoned to attend. 4. The Declaration of *Almighty God* in this Place is, that he will answer the Persons there spoken of, *by himself*, in contradistinction to his answering them by *Prophets*, v. 7. which is a plain Proof that the Persons pretending to answer them could not be moved by *God*, to do it, or speak the *Words* of the *Lord*. And what Instance is this, therefore, of *Almighty God's* speaking Falshood thro' a true *Prophet*; and this by an *arbitrary* Will: When He declares He will not answer such Persons at all by a *Prophet*; and gives the *Reason* of his proceeding; and punishes the pretended *Prophet* as a presumptuous, wilful Sinner against him?

3. But there is yet, say you, a third Instance thereof, more plain than the former. i. e. an Instance of a *Prophet* by whom God arbitrarily spake contrary to what he knew the *Event* would be. This is the Instance of *Elisha*, 2 *Kings*. 8. 10. who said unto *Hazael*, Go say unto him, viz. *Ben-badad*, Thou shalt surely recover: Howbeit the *Lord* bath shewed me that he shall surely die. On the contrary, I say, this

this is an Answer most exactly true, and exactly fulfilled by the Event. *Hazael* was sent to enquire whether *Ben-badad* should recover of his *Indisposition*: And to be sure was resolved to guide himself by the *Prophet's* Answer. If the *Prophet* had answered him that he would die of that *Sickness*, it would have saved him the Trouble of murdering him: If otherwise, he knew what he had to do. The *Question* therefore, being wholly about his *Sickness*; as to *that*, the *Prophet* answers, first, that he should recover, agreeably to your own Observation, concerning *Predictions* relating only to the Series of *second Causes* working in the World: And this was literally true, that he might recover of that *Sickness*; or that that *Sickness* would not prove mortal to him; which was the matter of Enquiry. *Howbeit*, the *Prophet* adds to *Hazael*, Think not that I am ignorant of thy Design: For God hath shewed me that he shall surely die another Way, tho' not of this *Distemper*. This the Event justified: For *Hazael* immediately killed him, as soon as he knew that his *Distemper* would not. And what is there in all this, freed from your disingenuous Comment, but what is perfectly agreeable to *Truth*, and perfectly answered by the *Event*?

But to justify your self for imputing those things to the Ever-blessed God, for the like to which any Man would be accounted a *Liar*, you appeal to *Jeremiah*, for saying that God had greatly deceived the People, and *Jerusalem*; which is manifestly nothing but that God, for a Judgment, had permitted them to be deceived by those *False* and *Flattering Prophets*, not commissioned by God, of whom *Jeremiah* himself complains; and to guard against whose Impressions, he himself was sent by God. The *Question* here is, whether God inspired *Falseness* into any *Prophets*; and commissioned them to publish this *Falseness*: And in this Case, whether he

he inspired the *False Prophets* to preach *Peace*, and at the same time *Jeremiah* to preach the *contrary*: When *Jeremiah* was the *Prophet* whom he owned, and the *others* such as he disclaimed; nay, such as are said to *bely God*, *Ch. 5 v. 12.* and not to have the *Word* in them, *v. 13.* and to *propheſie falſly. v. 31.* And were *These* inspired by *God*? If not, how will you answer it to *Him*, to make them *his Prophets*, and *deceived by Him*, forcibly and actively? When it is represented as their own Crime, and they are to be punished for it: And particularly affirmed of *Hananiah*, that the *Lord did not ſend him*, *Ch. 28. 15.* and yet the *People* trusted in his *Lie, ib.* And in the Language of *Scripture*, *God Almighty* would be ſaid to deceive the *People* by *Hananiah* the *Prophet*, becauſe in his Providence he ſaw fit to permit him to *propheſy a Lie*, which they believed and trusted to. This then being all the *deceiving* that can here be charged upon *Almighty God*; what is this to his actual inditing falſe Propheſies? And yet there are more Senſes, of which theſe Words are capable. For *Jeremiah*, thinking of the *Infatuation* of the *People*, trusting to *Peace*, even amidſt great *Calamities*, might well expreſs himſelf to this Purpose; This belief of *Peace*, is ſo great and firm, amidſt all Signs to the contrary. that one would think Thou, O Lord, haſt indeed ſent *Prophets* to propheſy *Peace*; ſince they could not, even upon that Suppoſition, more firmly truſt to it, than now they do. Or, it may very well be read, by Way of *Queſtion*, Is it poſſible that Thou, O Lord, ſhouldeſt have ſent, or inspired, thoſe *Prophets*, who have ſo greatly deceived this *People* into Thoughts of *Peace*? Is it poſſible that this *Deceit* ſhould be from Thee, whereas the *Sword* reaches unto the *Soul*? But it is every way nothing to your Purpose; and every way oppoſite to your groſs Interpretation: which is likewiſe directly contrary

contrary to your own Rule laid down, p. 75. (in which you seem to have been over-ruled for your own Confutation,) as it is such an one as is not warrantable from Scripture, or consistent with other *Texts*, and an Impeachment of the Truth of God.

But again, you allege that *Jeremiah* himself was deceived, and God deceived him. Ch. 20. 7. Was *Jeremiah* then like *Abab's* Prophets? Or was he one of those *Prophets*, by deceiving whom, God deceived the People? Or, did he prophesy of any thing, which in the *Event* did not come to pass? Or was he one of those *Prophets*, so severely threatned by God in *Ezekiel*, for acting contrary to his settled Rule? If not, then this Passage is nothing at all to your Purpose. Nay, but just now you quoted this same Passage to prove that *Jeremiah* complained of being deceived in those Cases, in which all allow that the *Event* depends upon Conditions; and in which God's *Veracity* is not in the least impeached. If so, then *Jeremiah* cannot be thought to speak here as if God had by him, after an arbitrary Manner, predicted what he knew would never come to pass: For this one Passage can't belong to both Cases. Nor can it indeed belong to either of them. For, supposing him to speak of God's deceiving him, it is only a Melancholy Complaint, as appears from the whole Chapter, of the ill Usage he had met with; and that God had, as it were, enticed, or over-persuaded him, as the *Word* signifies, (which may be called deceiving him,) to take upon him a thankless and reproached Office; of which he sometimes repented him. Besides, the Words may be interpreted interrogatively, Hast thou deceived me? And have I been deceived? Or, by Way of Supposition, If I be deceived, in taking upon me the Part I have, Thou hast deceived me: Which imply the contrary to

to what you would here fix upon *Jeremiah*. These Words therefore, being capable of a very fair Construction several Ways, it is the most absurd thing, and contrary to all Rules of *Interpretation*, as well as to your own, to chuse such an one as makes the *Prophet* tax *Almighty God* of downright, arbitrary, Falshood; contrary to all the same *Prophet's* serious Declarations; and not to be justified by one single Instance of such *Deceit*, in his or any other *Case*. Nay, that what *Jeremiah* complains of, is vastly different from what you here fix upon Him, is evident to any one who can but read the *Chapter*: in which he complains not in the least of any *Falshood* which God had engaged him to prophesy; or of any Prediction of his own, which was not answered by the Event, (the only thing to your Purpose;) but of *Derision* and *Trouble*, more than he at first expected; and presently comforts himself, that *God* was, and would be, his *Support*. And what is this to that *Arbitrary Deception* in *Prophecy*, which you audaciously attribute to the *Father* of all Truth?

I must not omit under this Head of *Deceptive Prophecies*, what we are told since the writing of this, in Justification of those *Failures* which your Friends are forced to confess in their *New Dispensation*, viz. that in the *sixth Chapter* of *Nehemiah*, there are, at least, three *inspired Persons*, prophesying a Falshood. Upon turning to the Place, I find indeed Persons called *Prophets*, or professing themselves such, pretending to terrify *Nehemiah*. But they were so far from being inspired by *God*, that they were inspired by nothing but *Money*, to say what they did: For *Tobiah*, and *Sanballat*, had hired *Shemaiah*, v. 12. I find God gave them no Marks of his Mission: For *Nehemiah* presently was able to see plainly that *God* had not sent them. *ib.* I find that *Nehemiah* was so audacious as to argue
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from *Reason*, against the Possibility of *God's* sending them. But what Degree of Zeal for what they have once espoused, must *They* have, who could put this upon the World as a Proof, that *God* forces Deceptive, or False, *Prophecies*, arbitrarily thro' his *true Prophets*; or as an Instance of any *Prophet* inspired by *God* with a Fallhood; or as a Justification of any such Failures in those who are truly sent of *God*? Indeed, I see not how the the great Enemy of *God* can well wish for a better Game, than that such Representations should be made of the *Ways* of *Almighty God*; and of the Fallhood of his *True Prophets*. But enough of this; of which I can hardly speak with the Severity it deserves.

And now, not content with having thus perverted the *Old Testament* to your Purpose, you proceed to deal with the *New* after the same Manner; and ask, with an Ayre of Triumph, if what you have before fixed upon the *Great God*, be not agreeable to the *Gospel-Revelation*, wherein we are told, that as for *Those who receive not the love of the Truth that they might be saved, God shall send them strong Delusion, that they should believe a Lie*. It hath often enough been said, and you know it your self, that the most remarkable *Delusions* are called *Delusions* from *God*: in which yet he only permits, for the Punishment of those who deserve it, such *Events*, as in the End prove *Delusions*, and *Deceptions*, to them. But, in this very Sentence, *God's* sending *Delusion* to that Degree that Men should believe a Lie, is plainly distinguished from his being the *Author, Framers, and Speaker*, of this *Lie*: as you inexcusably make *God* to be. This was your Business, to shew that *God* himself ever spake what he knew would never come to pass; and this arbitrarily: And you quote a

Text which saith that *God*, for just and wise Reasons, gives up some, who have stood out against the utmost Evidence of *Truth*, to a fatal *Delusion*, in order to their believing a *Lie* upon much less Evidence. What is here *arbitrary* in this? What is here of prophesying peremptorily of what is never to come to pass? What is here to make you *Father* this *Lie* upon *Almighty God*? These Imputations call for a serious Repentance. And it is not your private Evidences, nor your repaired Health, nor any of your positive *Affirmations* to salve the Honour of *God*, that can make Amends for these injurious and groundless Assertions: For so I hope I may call them; since I have examined every one, and found, and proved them so. But were it otherwise; and could you produce an obscure Passage or two out of the *Old Testament*, of which we could not, for want of knowing all Circumstances, give so full an Account, but that it might look this way; yet how unfair, and unjust, would it be, to make this the General Way of *God's* dealing with his *Prophets*, and with Mankind: when there are so many other plain Passages to the contrary, which assert that *Evidence* which he ever gives to his *True Prophets*, above that of any *False* ones; which Establish that difference between *Him* and the *Father of Lies*, and *Delusions*, which you have endeavoured to confound; and which appeal to the *Rules of Truth and Justice*, received by Mankind, in order to the rational Trial of his *Ways*? a Trial which you have endeavoured to Laugh out of Countenance; tho', without it, there can be no such *Faith* as can be acceptable to *God*, or worthy of Man. But *God* be thanked, you have not been able, with all your reading, and all your Zeal, to produce one single Instance of any Established *Prophet*,

to whom any Persons were obliged to attend, by whom *God Almighty* spake any one *Prediction*, *Promise*, or *Threatning*, which was not answered exactly by the *Event*; unless in such *Cases*, in which you, and all, acknowledge some *Condition* was expressed, or known to be understood: Much less any *Arbitrary Prophecy* of *Falshood* dictated by the *True God*; tho', in order to fix this Absurdity upon *Almighty God*, you have taken hearty Pains; and even contradicted your own Rule for the right Interpretation of *Scripture*, laid down p. 75. and affixed, without any Necessity, nay, against Appearances, such Senses upon particular obscure *Texts* of *Scripture*, as are contrary, I will not say, to the best and most allowed Dictates of Reason, (for *that* you despise;) but to numberless plain, uncontroverted *Texts* in other Parts of the *Bible*.

IV. I come now to those *Predictions* which are called *Decisive*: About the Nature of which we have no Dispute; being agreed that the Proof of the *Prophet's* divine Mission must be established, or fall to the Ground, according as these are, or are not, answered by the *Event*. Yet I doubt we shall, under this Head, very much differ from one another, in the *Application* of your own Rule. For you are so ingenuous as to instance in two or three *Predictions* of your *Modern Friends*, and to put the whole of the Cause upon their *Completion*; which have notoriously and most remarkably failed. Notwithstanding this, you, and others, still adhere to this *Dispensation*: Nay, I find the very gross *Failures* in it, are brought for an Argument of it's divine Original; it being more like the Ways of *God*, for these Signatures of his *Authority* in it. Good God! that ever such Marks of *Divine Inspiration* can be urged, as are the only Marks by which to know a *Delusion*! How

unhappy is it for *Christianity*, that our Lord arose again from the Dead, according to his Prediction! when, it seems, if he had not, there had been an additional Argument for his *Divine Authority*, to be drawn from this *Failure*. But alas, the poor *Apostles*, I doubt, had not understanding enough in the Nature of *Prophecies*, to have made so good Use of such a Failure. Well, but it is said, that it was only by your own hasty humane Spirit, that you made these things *decisive*: as Mr. L. the chief *Prophet*, did his *six Natural Months*. I desire therefore that you would give us an Instance of a *True Prophet* amongst the old ones, who ever did appeal to any *Sign*, as *decisive*, by his humane Spirit, disagreeably to that *Divine Spirit* by which he was led; to any particular *Events*, saying publicly, that he would own himself *deluded* if they came not to pass, and afterwards found himself deceived by God: Or of any uninspired Person, pitch'd upon by *Inspiration*, to defend a whole Set of *Prophets*; and this such an one as should spoil their Cause, by acting disagreeably to the *Spirit* of these *Prophets*; and by appealing to *proofs* which that *Spirit* never designed should come to pass. These, you will say, are *Trifles*. But can you, or any one, say that the *Inspirations* amongst you made no such *Predictions decisive*, as have egregiously failed? 1. Consider how many of the *inspired* predicted *Emes's Resurrection*; and the Day, and the Pomp of it. Nay, were there not *Visions* seen representing the whole Solemnity? As if God *Almighty* designed, in Mercy, by so remarkable a Failure, to make you sensible of your *Delusion*? Now, could there be any other Design in this, than to give Testimony to this Dispensation; as our Lord's Resurrection was to do to his? It was neither a *Blessing*, nor a *Threatning*,

ning, depending on any *Conditions*, exprefs'd or understood. If *Prayers* could have had any Effect; without doubt you have not been wanting to pray for such *Testimonies*. Our *Saviour's* Resurrection was not made more *decisive* by himself: nay, I will say, not so much, as this was by the inspired themselves. Neither was this spoken of amongst you, as designed by *God* for any thing but to give Testimony to the *Prophets* themselves. And this is sufficient to make it a *decisive Prediction*; and the Failure of it, a certain Proof that *God* was not the *Inspirer*, according to your own Rule. It was not your *Humane Spirit* only, but all the *Inspirations*, which spake of it as a thing by which *God* would determine the *Authority* of this *New Dispensation*; and, *this* failing, what need we look any farther? But, 2. The same may be said of Mr. L's *six Months*: which he could not be supposed to fix without Direction, as he thought, from his *Inspirer*. However, this is certain, that the *Inspirations* have owned some Occasion for greater, and more open Attestations, than any yet have been; and proclaimed *God's* Design, and Resolution, to do much more for the Conviction of the World, than what hath been done already. It cannot be a crime in any, therefore, to wait till these mighty Works shew themselves. Particularly, you your self p. 87. say, that this Period was fixed, and confirmed, by *six* or *seven* under *Inspiration*; and give us the Words of a particular *Inspiration*, in which you are commanded to acknowledge the *Lord* not to have spoken by *this Voice*, if open Miracles, public Attestations from Heaven, were not given within that Space of time. Could any thing possibly be made more *decisive* than this? In the same Inspiration there follows likewise the determinate time, beyond which *God* will not

bear with Unbelievers: And can you produce any Instance of God's bearing with the continued Iniquities of a People beyond the Time limited in plain Words by himself? Yet hath all this, and much more, failed: And now we are to be told, with little less than *Blasphemy*, that this is God's usual Way of dealing with the World. Lay therefore your Heads together, and, if you resolve to persist against all the *Failures* which you have met with; answer, if it be possible, to these few *Questions*.

i. Did God thus establish the *Authority* of *Moses*, and of *Christ*, by failing them in their most confident Predictions? Did he ever after this Manner set up any *Dispensation* in the World? Did he ever by any *Prophet* foretell any one thing, to come to pass, for the establishing the *Credit* of that *Prophet*, which did not so come to pass? Did he ever require of any Nation, or People, to attend to the Message of a *Prophet*, or Number of *Prophets*, and promise by them such and such Attestations, such and such Proofs of their Divine Commission, within a particular time; and then fail them, and still go on to require the *Faith* of the *People*, as much as if he had answered them? Nay, what are the Instances which you your self pretend to produce? Even supposing you have truly represented them; which I have shewn you have not; are they; or any of them, *Instances* of God's failing to answer the *Predictions* of his *Prophets* in any Case, in which the Authority, or *Credit* of the *Prophet*, was the thing aimed at in the *Predictions*? No. But the utmost that can be said in their Favour is, that they are *obscure Passages* of *Scripture*, of the Meaning of which we, at this great Distance, cannot give a full, and complete Account. And shall we therefore fix *Absurdities* upon them?

2. To what Purpose are such Predictions of *Attestations*? For the Credit of the *Prophets*, or not? Is it God's Design to convince the World of their *Authority*, or not? If not; then it is absurd, and blasphemous, to suppose him speaking to this Effect, that his Design is to convince the World by such, and such, particular Appearances. But if this be his Design; then He cannot fail of accomplishing such *Predictions*: because he hath told us, that it is by the Accomplishment of them, that he designs to convince us. But if after this; if after God *Almighty* hath proclaimed that he will by *these* convince us, and by *these* bear Witness to his *Prophets*, He can be believed to fail in these very *Instances*; and this out of an *arbitrary Humour*: it remains, that no Absurdity, no Contradiction, no Indecency, is too great to be believed of the *Supreme Being*.

3. If this be the Method of God's dealing; put the Case that an *Evil Spirit* should, in attestation to a *contrary Dispensation*, predict, and fulfil, several things exactly, without one Failure: what must the World do? or, which way must we turn our Selves? Is it come to this, that *Failure*, and *Deception*, is the *Signature of God*; and Uniformity, and a Correspondence of all Events, is left for the Mark of *Delusion*, rather than of *True Inspiration*? But *Humane Nature* is not so made, as seriously to embrace what hath not the outward Appearances of *Truth*; or to attend to any thing as coming from God, in which all the *Public Marks*, to which appeal hath been made, have failed to that Degree, that you are forced your selves to have Recourse to the more private, to which you your selves only are Witnesses.

4. According to the late Way of arguing, in Use amongst your Friends, how can you possibly

judge either of a *Revelation*, or a *Delusion*? If these main and open Proofs, upon which the *Inspirations* themselves laid such Stress, may fail; and yet the *Dispensation* be *Divine*: How shall we know what is not *Divine*? If these *Failures* be the Marks of *Divinity*; what are the Marks of the contrary?

5. If the Mark of *False Prophets* laid down by *Moses*, hath, as you say, Reference to these *Decisive Predictions*: Then how can you acquit your *New Friends*, all whose most *Decisive Predictions* have egregiously failed? What signifie any other Marks, if this *Criterion*, laid down by *God* himself, condemn them? Who is obliged to regard any other pretended Proofs?

6. If the *False Prophets*, of whom we are forewarned, be such as mix their own humane Spirit with the *Divine*; as you say: then, are not your *Friends*, by your own Confession, of the Number of those, against whom we are forewarned; and to whom we are forbid to attend?

7. If they be of the Number of those who are said in *Ezekiel*, according to you, to be arbitrarily deceived by *Almighty God*: are they not consequently of the Number of those, against whom the Wrath of *God* is in the same Place declared; and to whom the *People* were not to attend?

8. If *God Almighty* may thus fail them; if they have prophesied Falshood by his Inspiration, or by the Mixture of their own Spirit with his; if it be so common a thing for *Almighty God* thus to deal with the World; How do you know, or how can you possibly assure us, or your Selves, that your main Messag^e is not a Falshood, or a Delusion likewise? How can you prove that the Day of the Lord is coming at this particular time? May not *God* arbitrarily deceive in *this*, as well as in other *Predictions*? Former Predictions concern-
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ing it, in antient *Prophets*, cannot convince you, because, you say, it was the Way of God to amuse the World with arbitrary, and deceptive *Prophecies*: of which *this* may be one, as well as any other you can name. And your own *Predictions* can signify nothing, because these You have found not answered by the *Event* in many Instances, as *decisive* as any can be made. Again,

9. Your Inspirations have Professed, that in Order to prove your *Prophets* sent on this Message, great Miracles should be done in such a Time; and a particular Person raised from the Dead on such a Day. Now, if those Proofs, which were promised for no other End, but to convince us of this, have failed; then your *Decisive Predictions* have failed. But those Proofs, or *Signs*, which were promised, and spoken of, no otherwise than as what God thought wanting for the Conviction of the World, have failed: Therefore your *Decisive Predictions* have failed: And therefore, by your own, and *Moses's Rule*, the Predicters are *False Prophets*, not sent by God. Observe what I say, These *Predictions* were occasioned by the demand of open Miracles. They were *Promises* of great Works; and particularly of a *Resurrection*. These *Promises* were made purely for the Establishing the *Credit*, and *Authority*, of the *Prophets*. It was said so in the *Inspirations* themselves. The Time; the Day, fixed; and Circumstances declared. These things are what make *Prophecies* decisive. Now then, What will you say? Hath that Text in *Moses* any Signification at all? Or shall it signify any thing, or nothing, according to your Pleasure? Or can you give an Instance of any *Sign* thus promised; thus referr'd to by God; thus frequently, thus particularly described by any true *Prophet*; and this for the Conviction of the World: which yet failed in the *Event*?

Event? Or, is it fair and candid, after all this, to say that these *Predictions* were not *decisive*; nor designed so to be?

10. If these *Failures* in your open and public *Appeals*, and *Prophecies*, be not sufficient to convince you of your *Delusion*: by what Argument, or what *Event*, can *Almighty God* convince you of it? You put it out of his Power to do it; unless it be by answering all your *Predictions* by *Events*: For this, according to you, would give you some Suspicion, that the *Spirit of God*, which you have made to be an *Arbitrary*, and *Deceptive Spirit*, is not amongst you.

11. If the *Events* predicted, for the Confirmation of the *Truth* of your *Prophets*, had actually and exactly come to pass, I desire to ask, Had this *Dispensation* been more like the Work of God, or less like it, or equally, just as it was before such *Predictions*? If it would have been more so, for such a Correspondence of *Events*; then is it less so, for the want of them, and less credible in the Eyes of the World; and the World not to be blamed for rejecting it: And then likewise, is your late Way of arguing, and taking an Aire of greater Assurance from the Failure of them, a great Sign of a *strong Delusion* upon you to the believing a *Lie*. If it would have been less like the Work of God, if he had fulfilled these *Predictions*; or only equally as it was before; then is it the highest Absurdity to suppose *Almighty God* predicting such *Events*, as fit to be accomplished for the Credit of a *Dispensation*, when yet the Accomplishment of them would, it seems, have added nothing to the Credit of it; but rather have made it appear less credible, and less divine, than it would have been without it.

12. If you cannot name any one *True Prophet* sent with a *Message* of great and universal Importance; or any one *Dispensation* to which the World was required to attend; for the Confirmation of which *God Almighty* so much as permitted one such Appeal to be made, either by the *Humane*, or *Prophetical Spirit*, to great Signs, and wonderful Events, for the establishing the *Credit* of it; and afterwards failed in those *Events*: Ought you not all to lay your Hands upon your Hearts, and confess the great Indignity you have offered to the *Spirit of God*; by introducing him as making Multitudes of such Appeals; making repeated Promises, and Professions, of working such and such particular Miracles, at such a Time; at such a Place; and after such a Manner; and this for the Confirmation of the *Authority* of those who speak in his Name; and then failing in all these promised public Attestations? Ought you not to bewail the great Encouragement you have given to Men of *Unstable Principles*; the great Stumbling-Block you have cast in the Way of the *Gospel*; the great Contempt you have brought upon *True Prophecy*, and the *Old Prophets*; and the great Sport you have made for a Wicked and *Scorning Age* of *Unbelievers*; by fixing such things upon the *Supreme Being*, and his *Inspired Prophets*, as I really dread to repeat; such as leave no Room for any true Judgement concerning any *Revelation*; or any Distinction between *Faith* and *Credulity*; *Inspiration* and *Enthusiasm*?

What Thanks your *New Friends* may give you for your Performance, I know not. You have strenuously laboured, sometimes to prove them *False Prophets*, in mixing *Lies* with *Truth*; sometimes to prove them like *Ahab's Prophets*, over-ruled by a *Deceptive Spirit*; sometimes like those *Prophets* in *Ezekiel*, for whose Perverseness *God* threatned a terrible

rible Punishment; sometimes like *Hananiah*, of whom *Jeremiah* declared, that the *Lord spake not by him*; and sometimes even like *Baal's* Prophets. You implicitly acknowledge, that they are of the Sort of *False Prophets* against whom our *Saviour* warns us, by telling us we are to understand by *False Prophets*, such as mix their humane *Spirit* with the *Divine*: And you effectually convince us that they cannot be *True Prophets*, according to *St. Paul's* Notion, by assuring us, that their *Spirit* is not *subject* to them, but wholly out of their own Power to model and govern; and consequently that they are incapable of following the Advice concerning *Order*, and *Decency*, which that *Apostle* gives to the *Inspired* amongst the *Corinthians*.

How much the *Antient Prophets* are obliged to you, I have endeavoured to shew in the foregoing *Pages*: in which it hath been my Design, to vindicate *them* from your unworthy *Aspersions*, and pernicious *Mistakes*. And having done this, as effectually as I can, I leave you to such thoughts, as a calm Review of this Cause may justly suggest to you.

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such as adhere to the New Dissen-
tion, &c.



VI.
S O M E
CONSIDERATIONS

Humbly offered to the
Right Reverend the
Lord Bishop
O F
EXETER.

Occasioned by his Lordship's Sermon
Preach'd before Her MAJESTY,
March 8. 1708.

Written in the Year, 1709.

VI

SOME

CONSIDERATIONS

Humbly offered to the

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EXETER.

Occasioned by his Lordship's Sermon
Preach'd before Her Majesty
March 8. 1708.

Written in the Year, 1709.



SOME
CONSIDERATIONS

Humbly offered to the
Lord Bishop of *Exeter*, &c.

My LORD,



It is with extreme Reluctance that I force my self to give your *Lordship* this present Trouble. But the *Love of Truth*, which ought to be above all humane Considerations, will, I hope, plead my Excuse with your *Lordship*, and with all Persons of impartial and honest Minds, for the great Presumption of this *Address*. The *Cause* it self, which determined me to it, is a *Cause* in which I have for some time been engaged, and which I think my self under some sort of Obligation still to prosecute; esteeming it of the utmost Importance, both to the Honour of *Christianity*, and the Security of *Humane Society*: For the Sake of both which, it deserves seriously, and impartially, and frequently, to be considered, whether the *Nature*, and End, of *Government* necessarily take away, from the *Governed Part of Mankind*, the *Right of Self-Defense*; or whether the *Gospel of Jesus Christ* hath utterly deprived them

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of any such Right, and left them naked, and defenceless, against all possible Attempts of their *Governours*. Your *Lordship* hath been pleased to express some Zeal for the affirmative Side of these *Questions*: And I am sensible, that your *Lordship's Reputation*, and *Authority*, are so great, that of themselves they are thought, by many, sufficient to fix the Stamp of *Truth* upon what bears a Name so much honoured, and respected. But your *Lordship* knows full well, that where a Veneration for Persons prevails more than the *Love of Truth*, as *Truth*; there, even *Truth* it self becomes vile, and loses its Beauty, and Grace, before Men, as well as forfeits its Title to the Rewards of *God*. I humbly therefore, hope that your *Lordship* will not take it amiss, if I freely examine those Thoughts, and Observations, upon this *Subject*, which your *Lordship* hath lately published to the World. If I may be permitted to do this; it cannot possibly do the least Injury either to *Truth*, or the *Gospel* we profess: when it is seen that I do it with all the *Reverence* due to your *Lordship's* high Station and Character; and with all the Regard due to that *Integrity*, and *Goodness*, which shine so bright in your *Lordship's* Example.

My Lord,

The *Sermon* preached by your *Lordship* before Her Majesty on the Eighth of *March*, 1708, is the Occasion of this Trouble: Which, compared with that preached at *St. Dunstan's* in the *West*, on *March* 8. 1704, gives us such an Account of your *Lordship's* Judgment concerning the *Duty of Subjects*, and the *Original*, and *Authority*, of *Governours*, as seems to me to give just Ground for such an Examination of it, as I at this Time design.

1. In the *Sermon* preached 1704, p. 9, your *Lordship* acknowledges, that the *Scripture* leaves every Country to it self to establish that Form of Government, which

which is most suitable to its own particular Temper, and Genius. Again, p. 15. There is no one particular Form of Government that can truly be said to be of divine Institution, and Appointment. Again, p. 18, 19. The Designation and Appointment of particular Persons to the Administration of the Government, this is humane; and the Distribution of the Power of Government into one, or into more Hands, this is likewise humane: This is the Ordinance of Man only. Again, p. 23, 24, it is declared, that No Man hath a natural Right to the Government of a Kingdom: That the only Right thereto must be a legal Right, such a Right as is given him by the Law and Constitution of the Realm; i. e. by the sovereign Legislative Authority for the Time being. And that the Kingly Power is not lodged in our King, or Queen, solely; but in King, Lords, and Commons, conjointly; is freely declared by your Lordship.

2. I observe, that in giving an Account of the divine Institution of Government, Sermon, 1708, p. 4, 5. your Lordship declares, that that ought to be taken for the most rightful Government, which is established; and that for the best Title, which hath prevailed by Prescription, or is settled by the Constitution: That you do not affirm, or think it implied, in any Expression of St. Paul, or any other Scripture Writer, that the Form of Government, or Person Governing, are designed, and marked out, by God, any otherwise than as all Revolutions are brought about by the Working, or Permission, of God: And that when you affirm Government to be of divine Institution, you understand by this, that it is the Will of God that some should bear Rule, and that others should be in Subjection; and that they which bear Rule, should enact Laws for the Preservation of Justice, and Peace, amongst their Subjects, and duly execute the Laws made for that Purpose: In which two things, the whole Power and Exercise of Sovereignty do consist. This is all the divine Right your Lordship here acknowledges.

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3. Your *Lordship* adds, p. 6. That the *Authority* by which the *Magistrate* acts, in all *Forms of Government*, is a *Ray, or Portion, of the divine Authority, and Power, derived to him from, and communicated to him by, God*. But then your *Lordship* contends, p. 16. that this *Commission* from God to the Civil *Magistrate*, is not *absolute, and unlimited*; and that he can act with *Authority* no farther, nor otherwise, than as he is warranted to do by his *Commission*.

After I have thus presumed to lay before your *Lordship* your own Words upon these several Heads, in order to make farther Use of them; I beg leave to mention some *Particulars*, which seem inconsistent with these *Principles*, or in which I am forced to differ from your *Lordship*: tho' Matters of great Importance both to the *Religion* we profess; and to the Foundation of the *present Establishment*, under which we account our selves so happy. And I beg leave, with all Submission, to examine them with that Freedom and Impartiality which becomes a Lover of Truth. And,

I. From the *Magistrate's* being called the *Minister of God* by St. Paul, your *Lordship* argues, that he hath none above him upon Earth, to *question, censure, or punish* him; and that he is accountable to none but God.

1. In Answer to this, I might here put your *Lordship* in Mind, that St. Paul hath guarded his own Expression very cautiously, and judiciously; that he tells *Subjects*, not barely that the *Magistrate* is the *Minister of God*, but that he is the *Minister of God to them for Good*: which manifestly shews that he is speaking in general, with respect to the Nature and Design of the Office; which is the Ordinance of God, as your *Lordship* before explained it, in this Sense, because it is agreeable to his Will, that so good and useful an Office should be kept up in humane Society. But all this reasoning falls

falls to the Ground, when once it is supposed that the *Magistrate* is not the *Minister of God*; as it is impossible he should be, in any thing disagreeable to his Will: I mean in the Sense now contended for. Granting therefore, that in his Office he is the *Minister of God*; yet in contradicting the only Design of his Office, he cannot be so: Nor can the Argument hold good. This hath been argued at large in a late *Treatise*, concerning the *Measures of Submission*: Nor hath the least Reply been given to it, besides general and positive Affirmations to the contrary.

2. I might likewise put your *Lordship* in Mind, that every Person in the World, who is the Instrument of Good to us, is the *Minister of God to us for Good*. And this may be affirmed of them without any such universal and unlimited Inference as this: Which is sufficient to prove; that the *Magistrate's* being called the *Minister of God*, or, in the *Apottle's* Words, the *Minister of God to us for Good*; cannot justify any such inference.

3. I will beg leave to shew your *Lordship*, that the *Magistrate's* receiving a *Commission* for one particular Work, immediately from God, ought not to be an Argument, in your *Lordship's* own Judgment, to prove that there is none upon Earth that may question, censure, or punish him. Your *Lordship* contends, p. 16. That his *Commission* is not absolute, and unlimited, but confined to one Purpose, viz. that of Civil Government. Your *Lordship* contends, that, for another Purpose, the Ecclesiastical Officers have received likewise a *Commission* from God; and are the *Ministers of God*; as properly, for the Ends of their Office, as the *Magistrate* is for the Ends of his. Yet, tho' they be the *Ministers of God*, and his Servants only; it doth not follow, according to your *Lordship*, that there is none upon Earth to question, censure, or punish, them. From

whence I argue, That the being the *Minister of God*, in the most proper Sense, is not, of it self, an Argument to prove such an Exemption as is here mentioned; For if it were, then would the *Ecclesiastical Officers* be exempt from that Restraint, and Censure of the *Civil Magistrate*, under which your *Lordship* hath concluded them in all things, but those which their *Commission* empowers them to do. I would not willingly be mistaken: and therefore I add, that what I am now saying is this, That the being called the *Minister of God*, or the being actually commissioned by *God* for one particular Work, doth not, of it self, prove the Person so commissioned, absolutely exempt from all *Question* and *Censure*. And this I was led to say, by your *Lordship's* Argument drawn from hence. The Truth of the Matter seems plainly this; That, as the *Commission* of the *Ministers of the Gospel* cannot exempt them, in *Cases* in which they are void of all *Authority*, and to which their *Commission* reacheth not; so cannot it be proved, barely from their *Commission*, that *Magistrates* are in a more exempt Condition. For a *Commission* gives an *Authority*, and consequently a *Superiority*, only in those Points to which it extends it self; leaving all others as it found them. Your *Lordship* well observes, that they can act *with Authority* no farther than their *Commission* reaches. Consequently therefore, they can have a *Superiority* no farther than their *Commission* reacheth. And it follows infallibly from hence, that their *Superiority* vanisheth in those Instances in which they act *without*, or *against*, their *Commission*. One of these two Points must be proved: either that the *Commission* given by *God* to *Magistrates*, gives them a positive *Authority* to act against the *Ends* of their *Institution*, and the Design of their *Commission*; or, that they remain *Supreme*, even in those *Cases*, in which they have

have no *Authority*; and in which they cannot be the *Ministers of God*; tho' it be their *Authority* only, and their being the *Ministers of God*, that gives them this *Supremacy*. Nor should this, methinks, seem so strange to your *Lordship*, since the Case of a *Mayor* in a *Corporation*, who, after his *Election*, is not accountable to those that chuse him, but to the *Queen*, by whose *Commission* he acts, (by which Instance your *Lordship* very unfortunately endeavours to illustrate your Position) may be found to help us very much in discovering the Truth of this Matter. For the *Commission* given to this *Mayor*, makes him not superior to any in the *Corporation*, unless it be in the due Execution of the Office he is called to. Nor will the *supreme Governour* censure, or punish, any *Freeman* for opposing this *Mayor*, in any Cases but those to which his *Commission* reacheth. Nor doth the *King*, or *Queen*, by this *Commission*, exempt him from an Equality in other Instances. And in all Cases where the Danger is imminent, Violence is allowed to be repelled with Violence, and the same Behaviour which is allowed in the Case of *Equals*. Nor doth his being, in other Cases, the *King's Minister*, exempt him. The Application is so plain, I need not make it: and your *Lordship* affirms that the Cases are parallel. If so, then the being the *Minister of God*, and commissioned by him, gives the *Supreme Magistrate* a Superiority over the governed Society no farther than is consistent with the Safety and Happiness of the Society, for which alone he was commissioned.

4. Doth your *Lordship* think that St. Paul could not intend his Exhortations to have respect to deputed *Magistrates*, as well as the *Supreme*; and that he could not possibly understand by the higher Powers, in his general way of Speaking, all in so useful an Office as that of *Magistracy*? If he could, as he certainly did; then deputed *Magistrates*, as well

well as the *Supreme*, are called by him the *Ministers of God*: and this alone will destroy your *Lordship's* Argument drawn from that Title. Nay, Are not *deputed Magistrates* the *Ministers of God*, and may they not justly be called so, who help to execute so useful an Office? And yet we see, this cannot prove such an *Exemption* as your *Lordship* speaks of: therefore, neither will this alone prove it for others. And with respect to the *Case of deputed Magistrates*, it is observable, (what hath been often quoted by the *Patrons of Passive Obedience*) that our *Lord* told *Pilate*, that his *Power was from above*. But he being a *deputed Governour*, was undoubtedly accountable to Man: Which shews that a *Magistrate's* being called the *Minister*, or *Servant of God*, doth not imply in it, what is by some deduced from it. But, after all,

5. I must intreat your *Lordship* not to think that I am contending for the Words *Accountable*, or *Censure*, or *Punishment*. I know none who are solicitous about them. All that is contended for with any Zeal is this, that there should be a *Right* left in the governed *Society* to preserve it self from Ruine and Destruction: Which is a Point that your *Lordship* hath not touched upon. The *Commission of Fathers* is from *God*; and their very *Persons* are pointed out by him: Yet was it never doubted, as I know of, that, should a *Father* be so outrageous, or mad, as to attempt the Lives of his *Children*, his Hands may be tied, and Self-Defense be justly practised by them. Nor do I know that ever any one, merely for saying this, was reviled, or thought to dissolve all *Filial Obedience*. His being the *Minister of God* therefore, let it make him never so unaccountable to his *Children*; yet doth it not, in the *Case of Habitual, or Actual Madnesse*, take from them the *Right of Self-Defense*. So likewise, let the *Magistrate* be, in never so proper

per a Sense, the *Minister* of God; and never so unaccountable, never so much superior to his Subjects; yet doth not this in the least devest the governed from the *Right* of *Self-Defense*, and *Self-preservation*: As we see in all other parrallel Instances whatsoever, that *Superiority* in one, doth not rob others of the *Right* of *Self-defense*. And with submission, my Lord, if the Case had been put after this manner; every one at first view must have seen the little force of the Argument now before us. And what I have been saying holds true, whatever the *Original* of *Government* were, and whencesoever *Governours* have their *Authority*. But because your *Lordship* hath thought fit to enter in to that, I beg leave to follow.

II. In giving an Account of the *Authority* by which *Magistrates* act, your *Lordship* is not content that an *humane Institution* should have an *humane Authority*: but contends that the *Power* of the *Magistrate* must be immediately from God.

I. Your *Lordship's* first Reason is, because he can have this *Power* no other way, p. 9. for no *Man* hath it originally and essentially in himself: (which some Men will think a very great, and too large a Concession.) And that he can't have it from the People, is evident; because it is such a *Power* as the People never had, nor could have: and what they have not themselves, they can't give to another. The *Power* which your *Lordship* instanceth in, is, the *Power* to cut off evil Doers, i.e. *Enemies* to the *Society*: And this your *Lordship* affirms that the People never could have. No *Man* hath *Power* either over his own *Life*, or over his *Brother's*.

On the contrary, I do affirm, and hope to prove,
1. That, for the Sake of *public Good*, a *Man* is allowed to have such *Power* over his own *Life*, as to contract, that, when that requireth it, it shall
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be given up: which is all that is pretended in the *Case of Civil Government*. This is plain from hence, that when a *Soldier* voluntarily lifts himself into the *Service* of his Country, he contracts in effect to this Purpose; that when his *General* commands him for the *Publick Service*, and it becomes necessary for his Country's Good, he must, and will, venture where he is sure to lose his Life. So likewise in *Civil Government*, a Man may have the same Power over his own Life, voluntarily to contract, that when the *publick Good* requires it, and the *Magistrate* ordains it, he will submit. But your *Lordship's* Argument, drawn from a Man's not having Power, or Authority, to lay violent Hands upon himself, gives the *Question* a wrong turn; and is apparently of no weight: since it will as well prove that a Man may not voluntarily enter into the *Military Service*. There is, I hope, a great Difference between a Man's violently sending himself out of the World, at the time, and after the manner, which the *public Good* doth not require; and his contracting to give up his Life to the Consideration of *public Safety*: And a Man may have Power to do the *one*, tho' not to do the *other*. And because this may be thought not fully to touch the Point, I add, what will come nearer to the *Case* in hand, that, supposing no fixed *Magistrate*, or *General*, a Neighbourhood of Persons, in danger from *Robbers*, and *Murderers*, attempting their Ruine, may jointly consent to go out against these Enemies: and any particular Man hath such a Power over his own Life, that He may with Honour, voluntarily run upon inevitable Death, knowing that he doth so, in order to sustain the first Onset of these *Enemies*, and for the Safety and Security of his *Neighbours*. And as he hath this *Power* in himself; so, supposing a *General* chosen by *him*, and *others*, he doth by this Choice transfer

transfer this Right to the *General*, and oblige himself to do the same at his Command, which he might himself voluntarily do before. But,

2. It is of small Importance to this *Question*, whether a Man hath any such Power over his own Life, or no; if so be that he appears to have it, in some particular *Cases*, over the Life of others. Now, 1. The *Question* being here, what Power Men have, before there is supposed a fixt *Government* of a Society; your *Lordship* seems to forget this, when you say that a *private Man* would be a *Murderer* should He, of his own Head, kill even a *Malefactor*. For tho' this may possibly be true, in some *Cases*, supposing a *Government* fixed: yet supposing no fixed *civil Government*, this is so far from being true, that he would be a *public Benefactor*, who should kill a *public Enemy*. As *Cain* thought it but just to fear, that all would be armed against a *Murderer*, as an *Enemy* to the whole Race of Mankind, and had a Right to defend themselves from such an one. So likewise, supposing a *Band of Destroyers* coming down upon a Place not yet settled under *Civil Government*; have not the *Inhabitants* such a Power over the Lives of these *Robbers*, as to enter into a *voluntary Association*, and take Arms to defend themselves, by destroying them? And, may not they transfer this *Right of Self-Preservation*, by empowering one, or more Persons, to ordain, and do, what should be necessary on all such Occasions: and so give to them a *Power* over the *Lives* of others, as truly as any *Civil Magistrate* upon Earth hath it? And if in a State, in which no *established Civil Government* is supposed to be settled, (and some such there actually yet are in the Wildernesses of the *Earth*;) *Private Men* have certainly this *Right*; which is no more than that of *Self-defense*, and *Self-preservation*: then they may certainly transfer, and convey, the Exercise of this *Right*, in all ordinary

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ordinary Cases, to one, or more, Persons, for the greater Security of *Public Happiness*. And that they have not this Right, upon supposition of no *civil Government* settled, your *Lordship* hath not attempted to prove. But this is not all. For, 2. When a *civil Government* is actually settled, there are extraordinary Cases, in which *Private Men* may justly kill *Malefactors*, of their own Head, as your *Lordship* expresseth it; and consequently have such a Power over their *Brother's Life*, as your *Lordship* is pleased to deny them. As in Case of a sudden and violent Attaque upon their Lives, and the Lives of their *Family*, in which an Appeal cannot soon enough be made to the *Magistrate*; they have a *natural Right* to kill the *Attempters*, resulting from that *Right* to *Self-preservation* given them by *God*. And these things are so plain, that I cannot help expressing some Astonishment, to find a Person of your *Lordship's* Judgment, and great Abilities, overlooking all this; and urging only a few Affirmations to the contrary. All this shews that Men have such a Right to Self-defense, (which implies in it often, by necessary Consequence, a Power over the Lives of others,) as is sufficient to convey to *civil Magistrates*, agreeably to the Will of *God*, all that Power over the Lives of others, which they can justly claim, or lawfully put in Execution. Nor can I help observing, that our *Parliament* hath openly asserted the *original Contract* between *King* and *People*, as the Foundation of *civil Authority*; the same *Parliament*, my *Lord*, which laid the Foundation of that *Alteration* in the *Succession* to the *Crown*, which your *Lordship* defends in the former of the *Sermons* just now mentioned; and that *Parliament* to which we owe all the *Happineffes* we enjoy, or hope for.

2 Your *Lordship* is not content with this Argument only, to devert the *People* of all pretension of being the *Original* of *civil Authority*: But is pleased

fed to add, that the Position is directly contrary to what the *Apostle* affirms, That *there is no Power but from God*. A way of Interpretation, which will as well prove all *Usurpers*, all *Robbers* in Power, to have a *Commission* immediately from *God*! Whereas your *Lordship* knows, (and hath observed it in this very Sermon in the Case of *Nebuchadnezzar*.) that the *Scripture* useth this Expression in many Cases, where the *Providence*, the *permissive Providence*, of *God* only is concerned; and where there can be no *Commission* from Him possibly supposed. And here, *St. Paul* speaking of *Magistrates*; it is most reasonable to interpret these Words, that there are none possess'd of *Authority* for the good of humane *Society*; (which is the *Magistrate's Authority*;) but that this *Authority* is of *God*; agreeable to, and founded upon, his Will. Nay, all that your *Lordship* thinks fit to make of this, and the like Expressions, in the former part of your *Sermon*, is, that it is agreeable to the Will of *God*, that some should bear Rule, and some should Obey, in humane *Society*. And who indeed can believe that *St. Paul* intended by such an Expression, at once to condemn that Doctrine, that the *Power* of the *Magistrate* is originally derived to Him from the Contract or Concession of the People? I am sure when your *Lordship* can prove that the *Apostle* designed in these Words to contradict, and condemn, this Notion rightly understood; I may undertake to demonstrate, that by those other Words, *The Powers that be, are ordained of God*, the *Apostle* meant to assure us that the very *Forms of Government*, and the *Persons governing*, were then, and are always, pointed out by the immediate Voice of *God*. And indeed, I shall not doubt, by the very same Arguments by which your *Lordship* will prove that *St. Paul* condemned the one, which you are pleased to condemn; to prove that *St. Paul* did likewise as positively condemn

demn, to prove that St. Paul did likewise as positively condemn the *other*, which you are pleased to maintain. And if your *Lordship* think it absurd to hold that the very *Persons governing*, are *ordained* by God immediately, notwithstanding the high Expression of the *Apostle*: I hope others may the more easily be forgiven, who use not greater Latitude in interpreting the *one* Form of Expression, than You Your self do, in the Interpretation of the *other*. And why your *Lordship* allows not the same Latitude in *both* I cannot well imagine.

3. Another Argument I find added, *viz.* that the *Notion*, now condemned by your *Lordship*, is plainly grounded upon a Supposition false in Fact, *viz.* that there was a great Number of Men living before the Institution of Civil Government, which whole Multitude of Men had then, by natural Right, the same Power over single Men, which is now exercised by the Magistrate: Which your *Lordship* denies to be true, because every Man descending from Adam, and Eve, in his natural Capacity, is born a Subject to his own Parents, and, in his political Capacity, to the Chief Governour of that State, of which, at his Birth, he becomes a Member, p. 11. But,

1. Your *Lordship* in the same Place grants, that this indeed might possibly have been true, in case this Multitude had been all created at one and the same Time: Not remembring that you had before maintained, that the Power of the Magistrate could not originally be in the People, for reasons inconsistent with this way of arguing. For what signifieth it, in this Case, whether they come into Being all at once, or no; if the Power of Life, and Death, which is in the Magistrate, be, as your *Lordship* hath before declared it, of that Nature, that no private Man, or Company of Men, can have any Thing of it in themselves to communicate to any other? For if Men had all sprung up together

gether, they could have had no more Power, over their own, or their Neighbour's Lives, than they have, now they are born one of another. Or, if your *Lordship* will give me Leave to make Use of this Concession, that the *Power* of the *Magistrate* might have been derived from the *People*, had Mankind been created all at once; then I must argue, that all that your *Lordship* hath said before, concerning the Power of Life and Death, is of no Importance to the *Cause*.

2. Your *Lordship* is pleased to distinguish between the *Natural*, and *Political*, Capacity of a Man born into the World. From whence I argue, that a Man may possibly be born free in his *Political Capacity*; tho' not free from all the Subjection due to a *Father*, and *Mother*, in his *natural Capacity*. And consequently, if *Civil*, and *Paternal*, Government differ, as your *Lordship* seems to think; it will not prove, that there was not a Number of Men in the World before the Institution of *Civil Government*, to allege that Men are born one of another: It will not prove that there always was a *Civil Government*, to allege, that there was always *Paternal Government*. The *Right* to *paternal Authority*, is a *natural Right*. But your *Lordship* assures us often, that no one hath a *Natural Right* to *Civil Government*. And consequently, say I, *Paternal* and *Civil Authority*, are two so distinct Things, that though Man be not born free with respect to the one, yet he may, with respect to the other; and his being born, and consequently born under *Subjection* to *paternal Authority*, which is a *natural Right*, signifieth nothing to prove that there might not be a great Number born, before the Institution of *civil Government*, to which there is no *natural Right*.

3. Your *Lordship's* Argument against this *Freedom* is this; Every Man, since the First, is born a
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Subject to his own Parents in his natural Capacity; and, in his political Capacity, a Subject to the civil Government under which he is born. Now the Thing to be proved was, That there never was a Time without civil Government. The Subjection to Parents, I have shewn, in your Lordship's own Judgment, to have nothing to do with the Freedom we are now speaking of. And for what your Lordship adds, that every Man, since the first, is born, in his political Capacity, a Subject to the chief Governour of the State, of which he is born a Member; this is taking the Thing for granted which is the Question in Dispute. For the Point in Debate is, in effect, this very Thing, whether every Man, since the first, was born a Subject, in a political Capacity, to a Civil Governour: And your Lordship here proves it, barely by affirming it; which will not effectually convince those who seek for Reasons for what is affirmed.

4. If there be no such Thing as a Natural Right to civil Government, as your Lordship saith, then there must be a State of Equality preceding the Institution of it; and it must inevitably be founded upon a voluntary Compact and Agreement: without which, no one Person could have any more real, authentic, Right to it, than another. For if there were not an original State of natural Equality with respect to civil Government; then certainly there must be, in some particular Person or Persons, a natural Right to civil Government. But your Lordship assures us, there is no such Thing. Therefore, it follows, with a mathematical Evidence, that the State of Nature, with respect to civil Government, is a State of Equality. And I cannot but wonder to find that your Lordship can urge such sort of Arguments as seem inconsistent with your own Concessions: Especially considering that You have not thought fit in the least to consider

sider what hath been largely said by several Writers in Answer to this *Argument*; or to hint the least Consideration which might furnish a Reply to them. Nor can I wonder less, to find your *Lordship* declaring, p. 4. that the Title of the first Kings that ever were in the World, was most probably only their *Paternal Right* to rule and govern their own Children and Descendents. For this *Paternal Right* is a *natural Right*, and therefore cannot be thought by your *Lordship* to be a Right to civil Government over their Descendents; because, you say, there is no such Thing as a *natural Right* to that. That the *Fathers* of *Families* might be at first pitch'd upon by many Clans and Societies of Men, to be *Civil Governours* likewise, hath been thought probable by many wise Writers; or that their civil Government might have been submitted to, tho' taken up by themselves without any formal Choice: But then their Right to this, could not be the *Paternal Right*; but a Right founded upon that *voluntary Choice*, or *Submission*. Your *Lordship* therefore hath devested the first Kings, (who probably had the best Titles in the World,) of all Title to their Civil Power, by fixing it upon a *Paternal*, which is a *natural Right*; and at the same Time declaring, that there is no such Thing as a *natural Right* to Civil Power; and making a Distinction (as there is indeed a most manifest one) between Mankind in a *natural Capacity*, and Mankind in a *political Capacity*.

5. There are at this Day, and have been in every Age, Instances of People in the unciviliz'd Parts of the World, without any established civil Government: And if ever Government comes to be rightfully settled amongst them, it must be by *voluntary Compact* and *Agreement*; and, we see, hath been preceded by a State of as great an Equality, with Respect to civil Government, as is contended for by any Writer that I know of.

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6. But I cannot see what mighty Advantage your *Lordship* would procure to the Cause you defend, could you demonstrate that the *Authority* of *Governours* comes from *God*, in the Sense inconsistent with the Supposition of a *Contract* founded upon a *State of Equality*. For since (as your *Lordship* allows) the *Forms of Government*, and the *Persons of Governours*, were always, ordinarily speaking, of humane Determination; and these were certainly determined by *Societies of Men*, merely in order for the greater Happiness of *Society*, and for the good Execution of a particular Office: Since this is so, I say, supposing their *Authority* (upon such humane Appointment) to be conveyed to them immediately from *God* himself; yet methinks, this *Authority* can be only such as the Nature of their Office, and the Reason and Ground of the *Contract* supposed to be made with them, necessarily require. It will be very difficult, I believe, for your *Lordship* to prove, that *God* doth give any other *Authority* to the *Persons of Governours*, but what is founded upon the *End* proposed in their *Election*: or that they can be superior to the whole electing *Society*, by his Will, in any Instances to which their *Commission* doth not reach; or, in which they destroy the very *End* of their *Commission* given them by *God*, as well as of the Charge of good *Government* reposed in them by this *Society*. Nay, your *Lordship* declares, that their *Commission* from *God* is limited; and for one Purpose only: From whence it follows, that their *Superiority* is limited; and (to come to a plain Instance) that in the Case of *Governours* attempting the Ruine of a *Nation*, they are without *Commission*, and so without *Superiority*. The Consequence of which is, that, in this Case, *Self-defense* is a most necessary, and lawful, Practice. There are *Kingdoms* which are *Elective*: as part of our own *Legislative Constitution* is. Now when the *Electors* in such a *Kingdom* chuse

a King, expressly to rule them according to their *established Laws*; and he knows, and solemnly agrees to it: how can his *Commission* from God be any other than to do so? And how can he pretend to any *Superiority* in doing the contrary? And how is it possible to suppose, that he hath immediately *Authority* from God to change this into an *Hereditary Kingdom*, by his own *Act*; and the People all obliged to submit to such a *Change*? How is it possible that he can have *Authority* to do this, unless it be in his *Commission*? And which way it can be in his *Commission*, it is past the Skill of the ablest Head to determine: unless God can give a Man a *Commission* to destroy those very *Ends* for which he was elected; and which he hath voluntarily sworn to answer. Again, Who can imagine that our *Parliament*, chosen by the People to maintain our *Constitution*, and enact wholesome Laws, can receive immediately *Authority* from God to ruine it, if they think fit; and to consent to the turning it into an *absolute Monarchy*; nay, to the subjecting it to the *King of France*, or of any other *Country*: and the *People*, in a State of Damnation, unless they meekly submit to all this, which neither *Elected*, nor *Electors*, ever dream't to be in their *Commission*? Yet all this, and much more, if possible, doth your *Lordship* effectually affirm, whilst you maintain the *Authority* of *Governours* to be such, as that they can alter, annul, destroy, *Constitutions* by divine Right; and the *Slavery* of *People* to be such, as that all must be patiently submitted to. These, my Lord, are astonishing *Positions*; such as are void of all Proof, and indeed only affirmed by your *Lordship*, *Sermon*, 1704. p. 17, 18, 19. For my own Part, I must be so plain, as to declare again, that I think it toucheth the Honour of *Almighty God* nearly, as well as the Happiness of humane Society, to introduce him as granting such *Commissions* to *Governours*, and affixing his

Seal to what is contrary to his Will; as well as carries great Absurdity along with it, to give them a *Superiority* in those Points which absolutely contradict their *Commission*, and by this to take away from *Inferiors* all *Right to Self-defense* in all possible Cases. This is what is not done, I think, in any Case but *this*, in which the doing it is of the most dangerous *Consequence*.

7. This seems to me the Truth of the Matter. A *Community*, or *Neighbourhood*, of *People* living together, have a *Right* to defend themselves against *Robbers*, and *Murderers*, and *Enemies*: which includes such Power over the Lives of them, as that they may destroy them whenever they, or any of them, meet with them. But finding this a *State* of no regular and established Security, they resolve to transfer this *Right of Self-defense*, or *Power* over the Lives of their *Enemies*, to some particular Persons: reserving only to themselves the Exercise of *Self-defense*, in those Cases in which the *Magistrate* cannot act for their *safety*. This is allowed to particular Persons in all *Civil Governments* that are settled, in Case of *sudden Attakes*: And for the same Reason must be allowed to the *Community*, when the *Magistrate* refuses to guard against these *Enemies*; and much more when he joyns with them to bring on Ruine and Destruction. This *Right to Self-defense*, in Cases in which the *Magistrate* cannot defend the particular Members of it, was never given up to him by the Members of the *Community*: Nor was it ever supposed by any, to be taken from them by God. And consequently the Case of *Public impending Ruine* from the *Magistrate* himself, being of the Number of *these*; this *Right of Defending* the *Community* in *this Case* was never given away by it, or taken from it by God. From the whole I think it evident, that the *Magistrate* hath no *Authority*, properly speaking, but what the whole *Community*, or *governed Society*, have in themselves, supposing

no *Magistrate*: and consequently none but what may be transferred to *Him* by the *Governed Society*. But if your *Lordship* still be resolved to date their *Commissions* from *Heaven*; and to affirm that they are immediately from God, accurately and properly speaking: I must beg leave to reply, that this *Commission* being, according to your *Lordship*, for the civil Government of the *Society* only, and limited to this Purpose, God *Almighty* may grant a *Commission* to others for other Purposes, as your *Lordship* well argues; and consequently, say I, He may, notwithstanding this *Commission* to the *Magistrate*, give a *Commission*, for self-defense and self-preservation, to the *Society* it self. And I will humbly presume, that it hath pleased his Goodness actually to give this *Commission* to the *Community*; till your *Lordship* is pleased to perform a Task so useful to humane *Society*, as to prove the contrary.

III. That your *Lordship* should so positively confine St. Paul, to have in his Eye the *Person* of the *Roman Emperor*; and him considered not only as a vicious Man, but a very bad *Governour*; is very strange, and unaccountable: When his Words are all manifestly applicable to the *Office* in general; when he declares, that there is no *Power*, no true *Magistratical Authority*, but of God; in which the *Senate*, how much soever their *Power* was impaired, and over-awed, must share; and in which *deputed Governours* may justly claim a Part; agreeably to what our Lord told *Pilate*, one of them, that his *Power* was from above; agreeably to those other *Texts*, which shew it to be the Concern of Christianity, to press *subjection* to *Magistrates* of all Ranks, and which do command it in the same Words to the *supreme*, and the *deputed Magistrates*; and agreeably to St. Polycarp, who, in the very first Days, thus understood St. Paul, as is plain from his applying the Expression of the *Powers ordained of God*, to the *Proconsul*, a *deputed Officer*. And indeed,

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indeed, that *St. Paul*, designed what he said, to hold true of *Nero*, even in his worst *Character*, is what I hardly care to repeat. I rather chuse to believe *St. Paul* himself, who assures me, and all who can read him, that he is speaking of *Magistrates*, as a *Terror to evil Works*, and a *Praise to them that do well*; and endeavouring to reconcile some foolish Men to the *Office*, as it is useful to *Humane Society*, and not to the *Power* employed in destroying all the Ends that it is designed to answer. And if all the Wit of Man, or Art of *Logic*, can make *St. Paul's* Reasoning consistent, or tolerable, supposing him to speak of *Nero* only, when he was, even in his own Conscience, the Burthen of the Earth, and the Plague of *Society*; I will then believe any thing that can be affirmed of this Apostle. But otherwise, your *Lordship* will say, (as I see upon a like Occasion,) He could mean no *Magistrates* then living. What? were there no good Orders then kept at all? No deputed *Magistrates*, who did their Duty tolerably? No Acts of the *Senate*, to which your *Lordship* will allow any *Validity*? No Power which they claimed, that was to be obeyed, because in other things it was over-power'd by *Force* and *Bribery*? None to be spoken of to a few private *Christians*, but the *supreme Head*, the great *Emperour*, of whom they knew little, and saw less? But supposing, He was all that *St. Paul* had in View; might not this be written by him at the Beginning of his Reign, as hath been thought by good Judges, when he might be said to answer *St. Paul's* Character, as well as most Princes? Can your *Lordship* demonstrate that this was not the time of his Writing? And if it were, can You possibly think, that *St. Paul* would have said the same of him, when the remains of *Power* in the *Senate* awoke, and sought after him for *Public Punishment*, which he said, when he was truly the *Officer* that he describes a *Magistrate* to be? Let any one read the whole Passage in *St. Paul*, and try the Truth of what I have here alleged.

IV. In the *Third Inference* drawn by your *Lordship* from your Interpretation of the *Magistrate's* being the *Minister of God*, p. 16. you lay the Duty of *absolute Non-resistance* upon the governed *Society*. For your *Lordship* argues, that *tho' the Laws of earthly Governours be contrary to the divine Laws; (in which case the Magistrate doth certainly exceed the Bounds of his Commission;)* yet this doth not void their *Authority*. They are the *Ministers of God for all this*. In what? I beseech your *Lordship*. Not in this, I hope, in which they are without his *Commission*; and in which they contradict his *Commission*; in which they are without all *Authority*, either in making the *Law*, or in annexing the *Penalty* to it. They therefore, who refuse to submit both to the *Law*, and to the *Penalty*, do not resist the *Authority of God* in this *case*; because in this *case* there is none. But if your *Lordship* means, that they resist a Person who is the *Minister of God* in other *cases*: it is manifest this is allowed in the *case of Resistance to Foreign Invaders*; and to a Parent who should in a Fit of Madness command his Child to cut his *Brother's* Throat, under Pain of having his own Throat cut, if he did not. Here, my *Lord*, is an Instance sufficient to prove that *Absolute passive Obedience*, in some particular Cases, is not due to a Person who is the *Minister of God*, and acts by his *Commission*, not in these, but in others. The same may be proved from hence, that an *Ecclesiastical Minister's* being the *Minister of God* for one Purpose, doth not make it a Duty to submit to him in Instances, in which he is not the *Minister of God*. All Arguments for *Submission* in private Men to Punishments laid upon them without, and against, the *Commission* given to *Governours* by *God*, must be taken from *public Good*, and not from their having that *Authority* in other things, which they are allowed not to have in these. But here is the Case. Suppose

pose the Matter toucheth the whole *Community*; and the Happiness of that be invaded by a *Governour*, turned a *public Enemy* to it, in the main part of his *Conduct*: Doth his having a *Commission* from God for the contrary, make him not to be resisted in this? His *Authority* to rule well, which is all the *Authority* he ever had, is not indeed so made void, but that he hath that *Authority*, as long as he hath Power. But if he cannot rule, without ruling to the Destruction of the Public, and to the universal Ruine of the *Community*, Can it possibly be supposed, that it should be God's Will he should still bear rule; when he gave him a *Commission* entirely for the *Good* of the *Community*; and for nothing else? Can it possibly be supposed, that all Right to Self-preservation, and Self-defense, is taken from this whole *Community*, at a time when they are, in effect, without any established *Governour* to defend, and protect them? No more than it can be supposed that a Father, because he hath a *divine Commission* to rule his Family, is not to be guarded against, should he be so distracted as to seek the Lives of his *Dependents*; or may not lawfully be put out of Rule, and Government, because, as long as he hath Power, his *Authority*, in those Cases, in which he hath *Authority*, is valid.

But if your *Lordship* recur, as I see you do, to the general Declaration of St. Paul against *Resistance*; I beg of your *Lordship* to give a fair Account of this way of Proceeding, and to prove plainly, why it is, that this general *Prohibition* of St. Paul's must be interpreted *absolutely*, and declared to be without any *limitation*: when, in our Lord's own most express *prohibition* of *Resistance* in Case of private *Injuries*, *Limitations*, and *Exceptions*, are not only allowed, but contended for? Nay, when there are such a Number of general *Precepts*, and *Prohibitions*, in which all admit, and plead for, them. If your
Lordship

Lordship will say, that *public Good* requires it; as you seem to say, when you tell us, p. 29. *That it is much for the Peoples good, to be thus put in subjection to Magistrates*: You must give others leave to wonder how it can possibly be for the *Good* of the *People*, [i.e. every individual Person, of what Rank, and Quality soever, besides the *supreme Governour*,] to suffer themselves and their Posterity to be made miserable at the Will of the *supreme Governour*, when they see they can save themselves if they will, and establish a better State of Things. It is just as if a *Quaker* should argue, that it is for the good of all *private Men*, that they are forbid absolutely to resist *Robbers*, and *Cut-throats*; it is for their temporal Security, and Prosperity, to let them come in to their Houses, and cut the Throats of themselves, their Wives, and their Children; when they might prevent this, if they would. It is for their good to be thus put in *Subjection* to their *Enemies*. But this, I believe, with some sort of *satisfaction*, that as *Nature* it self will not suffer the *Quaker* to practise according to this Doctrine; so neither will the powerful *Law* of *Self-preservation* ever suffer a *Nation* of Men, of the most *passive Principles*, to sit down contented with their Ruine, when they have it in their Power to keep it off.

My Lord,

I will not trouble your *Lordship* much longer: but permit me to speak a little freely, with all the deference due to your *Station*, and all that respect which I have for your Character. There was a Time, which must be still fresh in your *Lordship's* Memory, when *Universal Ruine* was thought to hang over the whole *Community*. At this time, the *People*, (which is not a contemptible Word, signifying only *Coblers*, and *Tinkers*, as some make it,) the *Lords*, the *Bishops*, the *Gentry*, the *Common-*
alty,

pose the Matter toucheth the whole *Community*; and the Happiness of that be invaded by a *Governour*, turned a *public Enemy* to it, in the main part of his *Conduct*: Doth his having a *Commission* from God for the contrary, make him not to be resisted in this? His *Authority* to rule well, which is all the *Authority* he ever had, is not indeed so made void, but that he hath that *Authority*, as long as he hath Power. But if he cannot rule, without ruling to the Destruction of the Public, and to the universal Ruine of the *Community*, Can it possibly be supposed, that it should be God's Will he should still bear rule; when he gave him a *Commission* entirely for the Good of the *Community*; and for nothing else? Can it possibly be supposed, that all Right to Self-preservation, and Self-defense, is taken from this whole *Community*, at a time when they are, in effect, without any established *Governour* to defend, and protect them? No more than it can be supposed that a Father, because he hath a *divine Commission* to rule his Family, is not to be guarded against, should he be so distracted as to seek the Lives of his *Dependents*; or may not lawfully be put out of Rule, and Government, because, as long as he hath Power, his *Authority*, in those Cases, in which he hath *Authority*, is valid.

But if your *Lordship* recur, as I see you do, to the general Declaration of St. Paul against *Resistance*; I beg of your *Lordship* to give a fair Account of this way of Proceeding, and to prove plainly, why it is, that this general *Prohibition* of St. Paul's must be interpreted *absolutely*, and declared to be without any *limitation*: when, in our Lord's own most express *prohibition* of *Resistance* in Case of private *Injuries*, *Limitations*, and *Exceptions*, are not only allowed, but contended for? Nay, when there are such a Number of general *Precepts*, and *Prohibitions*, in which all admit, and plead for, them. If your
Lordship

Lordship will say, that *public Good* requires it; as you seem to say, when you tell us, p. 29. *That it is much for the Peoples good, to be thus put in subjection to Magistrates*: You must give others leave to wonder how it can possibly be for the *Good* of the *People*, [i.e. every individual Person, of what Rank, and Quality soever, besides the *supreme Governour*,] to suffer themselves and their Posterity to be made miserable at the Will of the *supreme Governour*, when they see they can save themselves if they will, and establish a better State of Things. It is just as if a *Quaker* should argue, that it is for the good of all *private Men*, that they are forbid absolutely to resist *Robbers*, and *Cut-throats*; it is for their temporal Security, and Prosperity, to let them come in to their Houses, and cut the Throats of themselves, their Wives, and their Children; when they might prevent this, if they would. It is for their good to be thus put in *Subjection* to their *Enemies*. But this, I believe, with some sort of *satisfaction*, that as *Nature* it self will not suffer the *Quaker* to practise according to this Doctrine; so neither will the powerful *Law* of *Self-preservation* ever suffer a *Nation* of Men, of the most *passive Principles*, to sit down contented with their Ruine, when they have it in their Power to keep it off.

My Lord,

I will not trouble your *Lordship* much longer: but permit me to speak a little freely, with all the deference due to your *Station*, and all that respect which I have for your Character. There was a Time, which must be still fresh in your *Lordship's* Memory, when *Universal Ruine* was thought to hang over the whole *Community*. At this time, the *People*, (which is not a contemptible Word, signifying only *Coblers*, and *Tinkers*, as some make it,) the *Lords*, the *Bishops*, the *Gentry*, the *Commonalty*,

alty, were all under one common Sense of Danger. Those of the Higheft, as well as Holieft, Rank, and of the beft Quality, invited over a *Prince* with armed Men, to awe their *Legal King*, and force him into a *Compliance* : and this they did, in their private Capacity. Numbers join'd themselves to Him, when He came. Nor do we account any part of our Excellent *Queen's* Behaviour more truly great ; more lovingly, or more beneficial, than the Part She bore in this Transaction : when She preferr'd the Safety of a Nation before all other Temporal Considerations ; and encouraged, by her Example, this glorious Design. The same was done by some of my *Lords* the *Bishops*, to their Immortal Honour, with a Zeal beyond what is common. A *Revolution* succeeded, which your *Lordship* acknowledgeth to have wonderfully saved both *Church*, and *State*, from Ruine. Upon this Foundation is built all our Happiness. To this we owe the present Felicity of a *Glorious*, and *Beneficent*, Reign. To this we owe that *Settlement* in the *Protestant Line*, for which your *Lordship* is an *Advocate*, even so far, as to wish it had been fixed many Years ago. And now, my *Lord*, how must it surprize all who can think, to hear it affirmed, that it would have been good for the *People* to have acted as if they had been put under such Subjection as your *Lordship* pleads for ? That it would have been good for the Nation not to have invited over Arms, and not to have joined themselves to them ? And for their Temporal Advantage, to have missed that opportunity, and to have sit down contented with their Ruine, unless *Regular Forms* prevented it ? And how must it concern all good *Subjects*, to hear a Man of your *Lordship's* Character, and Authority, assuring the World, that her *Majesty's* Title is only that of a *successful Usurpation* ; that *Submission* to her *Government* is indeed lawful, now it is settled ; but that the *Foundation* of that *Settlement* was laid in a *damnable Sin* : to find, that on

a Day, set apart to celebrate the Nation's Happiness in Her Majesty's Accession to the Throne, a Sentence of Condemnation must be read against that Resistance, without which She had never enjoyed either the Crown, or perhaps Her Life; and all the Nobility, and Bishops, and others, who so bravely interposed, to secure the Throne for Her Majesty, and Her Majesty for the Throne, called, in effect, to Humiliation, and Repentance? According to what your Lordship hath delivered, we ought all unanimously to move, that the Fifth of November may be changed into a Day of solemn Humiliation, and Fasting; a Day of Reproach to the Nation, when the Arms of Resistance landed, upon the Invitation, and to the Satisfaction, of the whole People? For, upon your Lordship's Principles, it was a Guilt, not to be washed out in many Years, till grievously repented of; and to be visited in some terrible manner upon late Posterity: as some pretend to think it hath been upon our Selves, by a long and expensive War. And I must observe, that if it were a Guilt; it was much more a National Guilt, than the Murder of King Charles I. For this we are assured by Authority, was the Contrivance, and Work, of a few Miscreants, against the general bent of the Nation: Whereas the Resistance practised against K. James II. was the Contrivance, and Work, of all Ranks, and Orders, of Men; against the bent but of a very few.

But I know, your Lordship is too well pleased with the National, and Beneficial, Consequences of this Resistance, to proceed so far. Without it, we had never had a Queen, so great an Ornament to the Throne; nor Bishops, so great Ornaments to the Mitre; nor any thing of Property, and Protestantism, by this time, left. And, since this is so, my Lord; since these are the Benefits which the Nation hath reaped by Resistance; since to Resistance we owe that

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that *Establishment* in the *Protestant Line*, which your *Lordship* wisheth had been many Years ago made; since, without it, we had had an *Establishment* in the *Papish Line*, so much dreaded, I dare say, by your *Lordship*: I may ask, what harm hath *Resistance* lately done, either to the *Queen*, the *Church*, or the *Nation*, that it must be thus run against with so unlimited a *Zeal*? And, why should that be absolutely, and entirely, condemned as a *damnable Sin*, any more than *Church-Separation*, by which we got rid of the *Tyranny of Rome*? This is allowed to be lawful in some *Cases*; tho' the *Allowance* may be as much abused, and tho' *Schism* be as damnable a *Sin*: and, can your *Lordship* tell why the same way of proceeding may not be allowed in the *Case of Resistance*? All *Separation*, is not *Schism*; All *Church Reformation*, is not *Church Destruction*; All *Killing*, is not *Murder*; All *speaking Evil* of a *Man*, is not *Slander*; All *Swearing*, is not a *Violation of the general Law* against *Swearing*; All *Resistance to private Injuries*, is not a *Transgression of the general Gospel-prohibition*: And, can your *Lordship* tell why all *Resistance* in a whole *Nation*, should be called *Rebellion*; and the *Practisers* and *Defenders* of it, in any *Case* whatsoever, be so often doomed to *Eternal Damnation*? It is wholly unaccountable by all *Rules of Interpreting the Scripture*, and moral *Prohibitions*. But not more unaccountable, than to establish a *Government*, by destroying the *Foundation* of it; to reconcile *Men* to an *Establishment*, by condemning the *Proceedings*, without which the *Establishment* could not have been made; to be preaching up the most absolute *Passive Obedience*, under an *Administration* which needs not such a *Support*, and which deserves not so bad a *Complement*. But however, if your *Lordship* thinks it fit to endeavour to reconcile *Men* to the present *Constitution*, as far as You your self judge

it proper; I hope you will pardon others, if they endeavour, by fair and calm Reasoning, to make them love and approve the very *Ground* upon which it stands: and whilst the *former* of these Methods can be applauded, it is to be hoped that, by all *candid Judges*, the *latter* will not be thought against the *Interest* of the *Nation*, or the *Government*. And as long as your *Lordship*, and those of the same Mind, go on to defend and secure the *Establishment*, by bringing an *Odium*, at the same time, upon the *Foundation* on which it is built; and making the *Gospel* to patronize the most abject, and most universal Slavery; to the great Satisfaction and Mirth of the Common Enemies both of *Church* and *State* amongst us: So long, I believe, I may assure your *Lordship*, there will be a Spirit in some others to take what care they can that the *Foundation* shall not be undermined, to the manifest Prejudice of that *Establishment*; nor the Doctrine of Servitude imposed upon whole Nations, to the Scandal of the *Church*, and the Disgrace of *Christianity*. And as particular Notice hath been taken, and distinct Replies given long ago to every Position of your *Lordship's*, in favour of *Absolute Non-resistance*, as well as to every Argument that hath been urged by others; which will be esteemed, by all good Judges, a great Advantage to the contrary Cause: So, I hope, the same Method will be taken for the future, with all plainness, and all *Christian Temper*. But I must observe, that neither your *Lordship*, nor any other Writer, hath ever attempted to disprove those Replies that have been given; or to advance any thing but positive and general Affirmations against them: which will be always a wonder to those, who know that Truth fears not the Light; or rather, that the Darkness of every Falshood will
presently

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presently vanish, when the Light of Truth is brought near it.

I beseech your *Lordship* to pardon the trouble, and boldness, of this *Address*, from One, whom a profound Veneration for your *Lordship* induced seriously to consider what proceeded from so excellent, and judicious, a Person; and who assures your *Lordship*, with the utmost Sincerity, that He is, with a very high degree of *Respect*, and *Esteem*,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Obedient

Humble Servant,

Benjamin Hoadly.

F I N I S.

VII.

An Humble

REPLY

To the Right Reverend

The Lord Bishop of EXETER's

ANSWER.

IN WHICH

The CONSIDERATIONS
offered to his Lordship are
vindicated :

And an APOLOGY is added for
defending the FOUNDATION of the
PRESENT GOVERNMENT.

Written in the Year, 1709.

REPORT

To the Right Reverend

The Lord Bishop of Exeter

ANSWER

IN WHICH

THE CONSIDERATIONS

offered to his Lordship are

vindicated :

And an APPENDIX is added for

defending the FUNDATION of the

PRESBYTERIAN GOVERNMENT.

Written in the Year 1800



An Humble

REPLY

TO THE

Lord Bishop of *EXETER*, &c.

My Lord,



Ince your *Lordship* hath done me the Honour to Write a Reply, with your own Hand, to the *Considerations* which I presum'd to offer to you; I find my self under an Obligation, on many accounts, to lay hold on the first Opportunity of paying this Public regard to it. And this I hope, and resolve, to do, with all the marks of that Personal Esteem, which I have ever sincerely express'd for your *Lordship*; with all that Veneration which I will ever maintain for your *Episcopal Character*; and with all that *Seriousness* which so Important a Subject requires: Being thoroughly perswaded within my self, that nothing can justify me in returning any thing unsuitable to that High and Holy *Station* in which the Providence of God hath placed your *Lordship*; or in handling a

Cause, in which the Honour of *Religion*, and the Happiness of *Humane Society*, are acknowledg'd, on all Hands, to be so nearly Concern'd, after a *Ludicrous* and *Sporting* manner. And the *Method* in which I propose to do it, I will now lay before your *Lordship*, and the *Reader*: that it may be the better seen, whether I omit any thing material towards the doing all Justice to your *Lordship*; or refuse to pay a due Regard to any thing of Importance to the *Cause* in Hand.

I. I beg leave to give my own *Reasons* for having before troubled your *Lordship* in so Public a manner.

II. I am oblig'd, by the Laws of *Common Justice*, to review all those *Passages*, in which your *Lordship* complains that I have been guilty of *Misrepresenting* your Sense; or of something worse.

III. I design to consider again those *Points*, which your *Lordship* hath endeavour'd to defend against the *Arguments* which I presum'd to urge against them.

IV. I find my self oblig'd to make an *Apology* for the *Concern* which I have shewn, with respect to the *Subject* now before us; and once more to speak of the singular Importance of it to the present *Happy Establishment*.

I. I beg leave to give my own *Reasons* for having before troubled your *Lordship* in so Public a manner: And these were, the *Importance* of the *Matter*; the *Authority* of your *Lordship*; and the *Triumphs* of *Others*.

1. The *Importance* of the *Matter*; and this not only to your *Lordship*, or to my self; but to the whole Nation of our *Fellow Subjects*, who are all equally concern'd in this *Debate*. This your *Lordship* speaks of, more than once; and is free to acknowledge

knowledge the *Question* between us, to be of the utmost, and most extensive, Importance. And therefore, since my *Conscience* is as fully persuaded of the *Truth* of what I have maintain'd, as your *Lordship* could possibly be, of what *You* were pleas'd to Publish to the World; it is but a natural Consequence of this Persuasion, that I should represent to the World such *Considerations* relating to this *Cause*, as appear'd to me of great moment: unless there were other more prevailing Reasons to make it unnecessary, or improper. But,

2. Your *Lordship's* Great Reputation, and that wide Influence which the *Authority* of such a *Name* carries with it, was so far from being an *Argument* against this, (which yet is the chief *Subject* of some Mens *Severity*,) that it could not but help to determine me to it. There is but little danger, and little reason to appear, when Men, whose influence is very narrow, and whose Names carry but little impression along with them, assert and maintain any *Doctrines* of Importance, which stand in need of an *Authority* to support them, and make them spread. But when a Person, whose *Character* is Great, and Powerful, publicly asserts the same; the more *Veneration* there is paid to his *Authority*, the more necessity is there, in proportion, publicly to examine the *Arguments*, and try the *Foundations*, upon which his *Assertions* are built. And I would appeal to those Persons themselves, who are now most offended on this Head, whether, upon *Supposition* that your *Lordship* had maintain'd the contrary *Doctrines* to those which you have espoused, they would not be free to allow that the likelihood of many *Readers* being carried into such *Errors* by the *Magic* of a *Great Name*, was a powerful *Reason* why something should be offer'd, to prevent this, in as Public a manner as possible. Nor can I think it a sign of the least disrespect, but rather the contrary, that, having passed over so many, who have from time to time maintain'd the

same *Doctrines*, I was induc'd, on this account, to address your *Lordship* in so public a manner. Nor indeed was it without Reason that I thus judg'd: For,

3. The *Boasts* and *Triumphs* of others confirm'd me in this *Judgment*; and still added to the necessity of my answering publicly to such *Defiances* as were made on this Occasion. When your *Lordship's* last *Accession-Sermon* appear'd in Print, it was the general Discourse of many, that now there was no farther need of an *Answer* to any thing I had written concerning the *Measures* of *Submission*; that your *Lordship* had undertaken the *Cause*, and, in a very few *Pages*, unanswerably demonstrated the Weakness of my Principles; that since I had publicly appear'd on the contrary side, I ought now either publicly to acknowledge my self convinc'd, or shew the Reasons why I was not. My *Fate* indeed was very hard: that, if I *did not* Answer, it should be esteem'd a proof that I *could not*; and if I did, it should be esteem'd an Argument of nothing but want of Modesty, and Humility. However, leaving such Persons to answer for their hard *Censures*, I thought it but due to their Demands, to give them the *Reasons* why *others* could not find that Satisfaction in your *Lordship's* Arguments which *they* express'd; as well as to shew the unhappy influence of those Principles, of which they appear'd so fond, upon the present happy *Establishment*.

I know that where there hath been a particular, and intimate Friendship, or great Personal Obligations, Decency seems to many to forbid a public Application. I confess, I cannot see why: provided the *Question* be of the utmost Importance; and the Application made with *Civility*, and *Respect*. But however that be; I must beg leave, for several good Reasons, to declare that I had no such Considerations

Considerations to render mine the less Decent: Having never heretofore had the Honour of any particular or intimate acquaintance, or so much as of any *Conversation* with your *Lordship*, but what hath been mix'd, general, and accidental.

This, my *Lord*, is the true account of the matter. Had the *Cause* been a *Cause* of Consequence only to your *Lordship*, or my self; or of any thing less than *Universal Importance*; or, had your *Lordship* been a Person of little or no Influence, or *Authority*, in the World; or, had not many express'd their Zeal against Men of contrary Principles upon this Occasion, and demanded an *Answer* to what they thought unanswerable: I confess, I think I might have been justly blam'd, had I not continued wholly Silent; or, had I not in a more private manner address'd to your *Lordship*. And that this is the true account of my great, and, according to some Men, unpardonable Presumption, I can produce very good Witnesses, as unexceptionable to your *Lordship* as possible; who will testify with what *Reluctance* I enter'd upon the Work; nay, how much resolv'd I was against a public Address to your *Lordship* on this occasion; till many others, as well as my self, were satisfied that these were such *Reasons*, as made it not only *justifiable*, but *necessary*. How unkind, therefore, it is in your *Lordship* to represent me, as violently assaulting your *Lordship*, merely because you are an * *Ecclesiastical Governour*, and as thinking it agreeable to my own *Principles* to do * *Answ p. 10.* so, is past my Skill to express in Words. I must leave it to your *Lordship* to consider, to which of my *Principles* this is agreeable: Whether it follows, from my asserting a *Right* in the whole *Govern'd Society* to preserve it self from being ruined by its *Civil Governours*, that I must therefore be ready to assault

a *Bishop*, merely because a *Bishop* is thought by some People to be a sort of an *Ecclesiastical Governour*, as your *Lordship* expresseth your self; or, whether it follows from my having taken a great deal of Pains to vindicate the *Apostolical Institution* of *Episcopal Government*, as to the *Essentials* of it, that I must therefore think it agreeable to my Principles, in your *Lordship's* Phrase, to single out, and set upon, a *Bishop* rather than any other Man, that was more undoubtedly my Equal or Inferior. And till it can be cleared, to which of my Principles it is agreeable, violently to assault a *Bishop*, merely because he is a *Governour*; I hope I shall find so much favour with all equitable Judges, as to be believ'd, when I assure them that I have here given the true and only Reasons of my troubling your *Lordship* in so public a manner: As I likewise hope that the differing from your *Lordship* in Judgment, and the representing the Ground of this difference to the World; will not pass with every Body for a violent Assault upon your *Lordship*.

As for the manner, in which I have represented it; I am very sensible that, in the hast or heat of Writing, some words or expressions may escape, which had better not have been used: And, as I never was unwilling to make all favourable allowances for others; so, I shall ever acknowledge that I stand in need of them my self. And therefore, if I have failed, in the least degree, in personal Regard to your *Lordship*, or in the respect due from an Inferior to a Superior: as I am sure it was contrary to my design and resolution, so am I ready to ask your *Lordship's* forgiveness. If I have made use of any word or expression, which may unnecessarily, as well as undesignedly, have proved disagreeable to your *Lordship*; I am much more ready to retract it, than ever I was to insert it. But if,

Zeal

Zeal to shew its Importance to the whole Nation, in its present Condition, the *Argument* it self presseth hard; I am not to be blam'd for that: Nor is this to be attributed to the want of *Respect* and *Civility*; but to the appearing Cogency of *Truth*, and *Reason*. This satisfaction, indeed, I have, upon the Review, that I don't find your *Lordship* can charge me with any Expression, inconsistent with a very great respect to your *Character*, and *Station*: and, on the other hand, that I perceive those who have been pleased to speak most freely of my *Impudence*, and I know not what, have not been able to point out any thing of that nature, but either the bare addressing to your *Lordship*, which I have now accounted for; or the pressing an *Argument* further than they could have wished; or the shewing the inestimable Advantages of the late *Revolution*, and the *Establishment* built upon it; and the evil Consequence, to the publick Happiness, of condemning a *Practice* which was the *foundation* of all the *Civil* Happiness which we have, or which we hope for. This, it seems, is the highest pitch of *Boldness*: And it is but *Modesty* now at length to *forget*, and *forgive*, those who saved us! But I will not detain your *Lordship* any longer upon this Head.

II. I am now obliged, by the Laws of *Common Justice*, to review all those *Passages*, in which your *Lordship* complains I have been guilty of misrepresenting your Sense; or of something worse: And these I shall produce in the order in which I meet with them in your *Lordship's Answer*.

I. In the *Considerations* which I presumed to offer to your *Lordship*, p. 307. I have these words, *It deserves seriously, and impartially, and frequently, to be considered, whether the Nature, and End, of Government necessarily take away from the Governed part*
of

of Mankind, the Right of Self-defense: Or, whether the Gospel of Jesus Christ hath utterly deprived them of any such Right, and left them naked, and defenseless, against all possible attempts of their Governours. Then I add, Your Lordship hath been pleased to express some Zeal for the affirmative side of these Questions. To this your Lordship is pleased to say, p. 6. A Notorious Falshood! by meeting with which at the beginning of your Letter, your Reader may judge what fair Usage of me, He is like to meet with, in the rest of it. Before I reply to this, I beg leave to premise,

1. By *Self-defense* here is to be understood, not that which your Lordship calls *Mere Self-defense*, about which there never was any *Dispute* between any two *Writers*; and which I shall by and by shew to be No *Real*, but only a *Nominal, Self-defense*: but *Self-defense*, in the sense in which I have all along used the word throughout these *Considerations*; in which it was ever understood in this *Controversy*; and in which alone there ever was any *Debate* about it.

2. I did not represent it here, as a blameable, or unjustifiable Thing, to say that the *Gospel* hath deprived Men of any *natural Right*; or torbid in some *Cases* the exercise of any *natural Right*; as any one would think from your Lordship's Answer, p. 6. On the contrary, many will bear me Witness, that I have often inculcated it, as a peculiar Precept of the *Gospel*, in many *Cases*, to recede from what we think our *Right*, for the good of our *Brethren*, and the *Public Happiness*. But this is what I cannot think reasonable; that, when the *insisting* upon a *Right*, and exercising it, is absolutely necessary to the preservation of the whole *Community*, in this *Case*, the same *Gospel*, which never would have commanded the receding from the least *Right*, but for the sake of the good of others, and of *Public*

the Happiness, should be represented as forbidding us to make use of a most important *Right*, when *Public Good* most manifestly is destroyed without it. On the contrary, I think it more consistent to found both upon the same *Public Good*: Judging from *that*, when it is the duty of a private Man to recede from his particular *Right*; and when it is fit for a whole *Community* to insist upon what is a *Right* of general and universal importance. Having premised these two Observations, I come now to answer to this Charge. And,

1. What I here presumed to fix upon your *Lordship*, doth not necessarily relate to the *Two Accession Sermons*: For I was not enter'd upon the Examination of them, when I said this. I am fully persuaded that your *Lordship* hath, upon many occasions, been a great *Advocate* for that *Absolute Passive Obedience* in *Subjects*, considered as *Subjects*, and considered as *Christians*, which takes away from them all *Right* to that *Self-defense* by *Resistance*, which is necessary to the saving them from Ruine in some possible attempts of their *Governours*: And I know that your *Lordship* hath expressed a great *Zeal* against such as have endeavoured to argue the contrary from the *Nature* and *End* of *Government*, and to answer the *Texts* of *Scripture* alleged for it. And therefore, I see not how it can deserve such a *Censure*, to say so: except it may be accounted a *notorious Falshood*, to express your *sense* truly without using your very words, where I don't pretend to use them; or to say in *general*, that your *Lordship* hath expressed a *Zeal* for a *Doctrine*, supposing it be not in *this*, or *that*, particular Discourse not yet expressly referr'd to. But,

2. Your *Lordship* having produced my own *Testimony*, that you have not touched upon the point of *Self-Defense*; and having thence inferr'd the *Notorious Falshood* of what I before had said: I must therefore

therefore be at a little pains to explain what, I dare say, few ever imagined could be the ground of any such Inference. In the *Considerations*, p. 314. I am returning, as I have been in the foregoing pages, an Answer to your *Lordship's* arguing, from the *Magistrate's* being called the *Minister of God*, against his being *Questioned*, *Censured*, or *Punished*; or his being for any thing accountable to any upon Earth. And, after I have shewn that even *this* doth not follow from his being called the *Minister of God*, I thought it proper to add, that your *Lordship* had not touched upon the point of *Self-defense*. Now whoever considers that I am here answering only to your *Lordship's* way of managing one particular *Argument*, cannot possibly imagine that I could intend any thing more in this, than that your *Lordship*, in that particular *Argument*, about which only I was then *speaking*, had not expressly handled the matter of *Self-defense*; the very mention of which would perhaps have opened the Eyes of many of your *Readers*: as I explain my self in the next Page in these words. *And with submission, my Lord, if the Case had been put after this manner, &c.* But how it follows from hence, that it is a *notorious falshood* to say that your *Lordship* hath, upon other *occasions*, or in other *Arguments* upon the like Subject, or in other Parts of this very *Sermon*, laid such a *Duty* upon the *subject* Part of Mankind, as is inconsistent in some Cases with *Self-defense*, or *Self-preservation*, will be very hard to shew. Nay, I will go farther, and say, that I may maintain, that in the handling of this *particular Argument*, your *Lordship* hath cautiously avoided touching upon the point of *Self-defense*; (for my Observation turns upon *that*;) and yet without any inconsistency, and with a great deal of justice, may affirm, that your *Lordship* hath endeavoured, under the

the Colour of other Expressions, not so easily seen through, (such as *Censure, Punishment, Accountable,*) to devest the Governed part of Mankind from all *Right* to any but a nominal *Self-defense*: As I dare say, Your *Lordship* was understood by all; as well by those who could, as by those who could not, agree with your *Lordship* in this way of arguing. Not that I would have it thought that this is all I have to say for presuming to tax your *Lordship* with a Zeal against that *Self-defense*, about which only there ever was a *Contest*: For,

3. I am now going to appeal to these very *Sermons* themselves, which gave occasion to the whole *Debate*: and to produce such *Passages* out of them, as may well justify me from this unkind Charge; and prove to the World, that your *Lordship* hath effectually devested the Governed part of the World of all *Right* to *Self-defense*. In that very part of your *Lordship's* *Sermon*, 1708. in which you infer from the *Magistrate's* being the *Minister* of God, that there is none upon Earth, to *Question, Censure, or Punish* him, your *Lordship* is not content with these words; but applies, in the same unlimited manner, those words of the *Apostle's*, connecting them thus, *And whosoever resisteth the Power, resisteth the Ordinance of God*. This I mention, not to find fault with the use of this Expression of the *Apostle's*: But to shew, that a *Judicial Censuring*, and *Questioning*, was not the chief thing in your *Lordship's* Thoughts when you wrote that *Passage*; but that, under the Patronage of those words, the *Reader* was to be led to an inference against all *Self-defense* by *Resistance*, as well as against all other *Censuring, Questioning, Punishing*. The same is plain from your *Lordship's* Instance, p. 8. of a *Mayor* chosen by the *Members* of a *Corporation*: From which *Members* your *Lordship* doth there take a-
way

way all *Right to Self-defense*, except the *Right to complain of him, or bear witness against him*, to the *King, or Queen*, in case of his *Misbehaviour*, who alone is to judge whether he did misbehave himself or not. In this Similitude, these *Members of a Corporation*, answer to the *Governed part of Mankind*. The *Mayor to the Governour, or Governours*. The *King, from whom his Commission comes, to Almighty God, from whom comes the King's Commission*. And is not the design of this Similitude plainly to devest the *Governed part of Mankind* (whose Case is made the same with that of these *Members of a Corporation*) of all *Right to Self-defense* in the *extremest Cases*; unless it be by *complaining, and bearing witness, against their Governour, to Almighty God, from whom he had his Authority, and to whom only it belongs, according to this Instance, to judge whether He misbehave himself, or not*. To go on to p. 9. of the same Sermon. When your *Lordship* comes to apply this *Instance* to the *Roman Emperours*; and to shew that, *tho' they were chosen by the Army or Senate*, yet, they were not *accountable to them, or any upon Earth, nor to be Censured, Questioned, or Punished, by any*: I say, when your *Lordship* comes to shew this, you do it, not by inferring the absurdity of the *Senate or People's* formally sitting in *Judgment* upon the *Emperour*; but by alleging that the *Apostle declares it to be unlawful for Subjects to make Resistance, and denounces Damnation to such as dare to do it*. From whence it again appears, that, under the *Covert* of such words as *Censure and Punishment*, your *Lordship* meant to contend against all *Self-defense by Resistance*: And that You had not in your thoughts a *Censure, and Punishment, merely Judicial*. And this *Argument* of your *Lordship's* is, as you your self in this *Answer* contend, taken from the *Nature, and End of Sovereign Authority*; as well as from the *Words of St. Paul*: Upon which account I hope I may

may here take the liberty of justifying what I once said, and of saying it again, that your *Lordship* hath expressed some Zeal for these two Points; *That the Nature, and End of Government, and the Gospel of Christ, have devested the Governed part of Mankind of all Right to Self-defense, in all possible Cases, against their Governours.* For, I think, I need go no farther than the management of this single *Argument*, to make it evident. *The Unlimited Passive Obedience* which your *Lordship* layeth upon Subjects, in your *Third Inference*, p. 16. is likewise inconsistent with all *Right to Real Self-defense*, in some possible attempts of a *Governour*.

To come now to the former *Sermon*, refer'd to in my *Considerations*; Give me leave to examine what sort of Privileges your *Lordship* is pleased in that to allow to the *Governed* part of Mankind. P. 8. your *Lordship* explains to the Subject, the expression, *Fear the King: When thou canst not obey, thou must submit; and that not only because thou canst not help it, but altho' thou couldst; if thou canst not do as he bids thee, thou must take patiently the Punishment impos'd upon thee for thy Disobedience:* As likewise, p. 13. *This is the Duty of Subjects*, your *Lordship* adds, to their *Governours*: not in the least excepting, or making allowance for, a *Case* that concerns the whole Body of Subjects; or making a difference between *that*, and a *Case* of the most private nature: as is plain from all your *Lordship's* Declarations on this Head; and from your last *Answer*. Your *Lordship* goes on, p. 9, 10. to press *Non-resistance*, without any limitation. Page 12. your *Lordship* is very express, that it is not true Religion, and a well informed Conscience, but an ignorant, and misguided Zeal, or a Form of Godliness without the Power of it, that ever Arms Subjects against their Sovereign. This takes from the whole Body of Subjects, in the most extreme Cases, all *Right to Self-defense*. I pass by

by your *Lordship's* asserting, in this *Sermon* likewise, the *Supreme Civil Powers* to be *Unaccountable*, *Uncontroulable*, and the like: By which, it may appear, from what I before said, that your *Lordship* takes away from *Subjects* all *Right to Self-defense* against them. I pass by your *Lordship's* laying the indispensable *Obligation*, and that in repeated words, upon *Subjects* to acquiesce, and submit, to all *Alterations* in the *Form of Government*, of whatsoever sort they be; and this *Obligation*, deduc'd from the *Nature*, and *End*, of the *Governing Power*; and shall only produce one *Sentence* more out of p. 28. where your *Lordship* is shewing *who they are* who, in a *Criminal Sense*, are given to *Change*. They especially are most evidently given to *Change*, who, in *Case of any*, whether true, or supposed, *Disorders of State*, go out of their own way, and sphere, to rectify or redress them: And this they certainly do, who, being mere *Subjects*, do use any other means to get their *Grievances redressed*, than only *PRAYERS* and *TEARS*. In which words your *Lordship* doth effectually take from *Subjects* all *Right to Self-defense*, in all possible *Cases*: Taking your *Argument* from the *Nature of Subjection*, and the *State* in which *Subjects*, as such, are. Without looking, therefore, to any other of your *Lordship's* *Declarations*, but what are contain'd in these *Two Sermons*, I hope it appears, from what I have produc'd in your own words, that I spake not without *Reason*, when I said that your *Lordship* had express'd some *Zeal* for the *affirmative side* of the *Questions* I mentioned: For here it is evident, that your *Lordship* hath endeavour'd, both from the *Nature*, and *End*, of *Government*, and the *declarations* of the *Gospel*, to argue the *Governed part* of *Mankind* out of all *Right to Self-defense*, in all possible attempts of their *Governours*. And to deny this, merely because your *Lordship* hath never done it under the express notion of *Self-defense*, but by the help of
other

other words, signifying the same thing, is just as if I, supposing I had always avoided the word *Self-defense*, should deny that I ever pleaded for a *Right*, in *Subjects*, to *Self-defense*, because I never used that word, but the word, *Resistance*. For my pleading for their *Right* to *Resist* in some *Cases*, would not more effectually, upon this Supposition, prove that I had pleaded for their *Right* to *Self-defense*, than your *Lordship's* having pleaded absolutely against their *Right* to *Resist*, will prove that you have pleaded against their *Right* to *Self-defense*.

4. Nor is your *Lordship's* Mind at all altered. For in this very *Answer*, with which you have Honour'd me; in this *Answer*, in which your *Lordship* declares you will not touch the *matter* of *Self-defense*; your *Lordship* hath amply touched upon it: and effectually devided the whole *Body* of *Subjects*, of all *Right* to *Self-defense*. Of which I shall give sufficient proof, before I conclude this trouble.

5. From all this, appears the true meaning of your *Lordship's* words, p. 7. For (that I may not be wholly wanting in *Concessions*) I also am very free to grant, that Mere *Self-defense* is one of the most innocent means that the governed part of the *Society* can sometimes use, to preserve it self from Ruine, and Destruction, in Case of some possible attempts of their *Governours*: Which are enough to induce a *Reader*, who doth not carefully lay things together, to think that your *Lordship* here was willing to grant something, about which the *Debate* was. For if your *Lordship* doth truly make me a *Concession*, or truly grant any any thing; it must be something which was contended for, And if your *Lordship* grants the lawfulness of that *Self-defense*, which I contended for, this will vindicate me from the heavy load which, in other places of your *Answer*, is laid upon me. But if your *Lordship* means something by *Self-defense*, very different from what, it is plain from other Passages, you understand me to mean;

and something, about which there never was any dispute between any Two *Writers* in the World: then it is plain, that your *Lordship* here makes no *Concession* at all, and grants nothing at all. And indeed, it is too evident, from the following parts of your *Answer*, as well as from the *Passages* now produced out of the Two *Sermons*, that by *Mere self-defense*, your *Lordship* here understands the *self-defense* of *Prayers* and *Tears*; that the *self-defense* here in words granted to *Governed Societies*, in order to save them from Ruine, is no more of *self-defense*, than what is consistent with their being *ruin'd*, in many cases; no more than what is consistent with the most profound, most ready, most patient *Submission* to all that Misery which their *Governours* shall be determined to bring upon them. This is that *Mere self-defense*, which your *Lordship* is free to grant: which is indeed no *self-defense* at all; or no such *self-defense*, or ever was the subject of any *Debate*, or *Controversy*. And from all this it likewise appears that, at one time, your *Lordship* may in words grant a *self-defense*, without granting the thing meant by that word; and that, at other times, you may in reality contend against the thing meant by it, without contending expressly against that word.

2. The next Complaint of *Misrepresentation*, which I meet with, is in pag. 14. of your *Lordship's Answer*: Where it is said, that you can't but take notice of my foully misrepresenting your sense, when I say that your *Lordship* hath confined the *Magistrate's Commission* to one purpose: viz. that of Civil Government: Whereas your *Lordship* saith, that you have, in that very *Sermon*, expressly asserted that the *Highest Power*, or *Supreme Magistrate*, is *Supreme Governour*, over all Persons, and in all Causes. Now, I. Methinks I need not have incurred your displeasure on this account, since my whole design, in this passage, was to follow your *Lordship* in that distinction made

made in your *Sermon*, p. 16, 17. between the *Commission* given by God, to the *Civil Magistrate*; and that given by God to the *Bishops*, and *Pastors* of the *Christian Church*: and since I could not be supposed to intend to fix any thing upon your *Lordship*, but this *distinction*; my Argument in that place requiring nothing more. But since you have been pleas'd to tax me, not with an involuntary mistake, but with *foully misrepresenting* your sense, I must, 2. Beg of your *Lordship* to consider your own words, p. 16. of that *Sermon*, in which you say, That God hath granted to the *Civil Magistrate* a *Commission* for one purpose. These words, for one purpose, are your own words. And if God hath given a *Commission* to the *Magistrate*, not absolute, and unlimited; but for one purpose: What can the one purpose be, for which He hath given a *Commission* to the *Civil Magistrate*, but the purpose of *Civil Government*? If there be any other purpose, for which He hath a *Divine Commission*: yet, since I was arguing with your *Lordship*, I had not fairly represented your sense, unless I had limited his *Commission* to one purpose; as your *Lordship* hath in so many words done. And if you had assigned Him a *Commission* for more purposes than one, I should have been free to say so. 3. I beseech your *Lordship* to consider likewise, whether the particulars, which you afterwards name, be any other but the parts of this one general purpose; or any more than what are implied in, and result from, his being *supreme Civil Governour*: Whether his being *supreme in all Causes*, and *over all Persons*, be not the Consequence of his being *supreme Civil Governour*; or whether it implies in it a *Commission* for every thing? 4. If your allowing the *Magistrate* to be *supreme in all Causes* (for which I shall ever be as free to contend, as your *Lordship*) be sufficient to shew that I have *misrepresented* your sense, when I say that you have confined his *Commission* to one purpose; I see not how I could pos-

sibly have escaped this *severe Censure* any way. For, if I had said that your *Lordship* gives him a *Divine Commission* for many distinct purposes, (not implied in any one general purpose,) tho' not for all possible purposes; I might on the same grounds, have been taxed with *misrepresentation*; viz. because your *Lordship* hath asserted, that He is supreme in all, and not only in many Causes. And this Assertion of your *Lordship's*, which you urge against my representation of your sense, would have served as well to have confuted me, had I taxed you with saying that the *Magistrate* hath not a *Commission* for every purpose; as it doth now that I have taxed you with confining his *Commission* to one purpose. For it is equally consistent, and equally inconsistent, with both. If the *Magistrate's* being *Supreme* in all Causes, relates at all to the purposes of his *Divine Commission*; or contradict at all his having a *Divine Commission* for one purpose only; (for which end your *Lordship* produceth it;) then it must signify, that He hath a *Commission* for all purposes. If it doth not signify this; neither can it be proved from your *Lordship's* asserting his *Supremacy* in all Causes, that I have misrepresented your sense, in fixing his *Commission* to one purpose. And again, If I had argued from this expression, that your *Lordship* gave the *Magistrate* a *Commission* for all purposes; there are many express passages in your *Sermon*, which would have proved that I misrepresented your *Lordship*. I appeal therefore to every *Reader*, and desire to know, what I could do more unexceptionable, than what I did. I took your *Lordship's* own words, for one purpose. If for one purpose; it must be that general one of *Civil Government*, and for every particular purpose, included in that, or necessarily resulting from it. And I used your *Lordship's* own words for nothing, but to introduce that distinction of *Commission*, as to which you cannot complain

plain of any *misrepresentation*: And therefore, I believe, may safely leave it to any one to determine, whether I have here given occasion to your *Lordship's Charge*.

3. The *Manifest Falsification* charged upon me by your *Lordship*, p. 20. shall be considered under the *Third general Head*, when I come to the *Argumentative* part of your *Lordship's Answer*.

4. P. 36. Your *Lordship* taxes me with *pleading your Authority*, for a thing which you never did, never meant to affirm in that latitude, in which I interpret your words. That there is no such thing as a Natural Right to Civil Government, your *Lordship*, I think, owns you have affirmed: But not, that there never was, in any, a Natural Right to Civil Government. And it may be, I was mistaken in understanding your *Lordship* to speak of *Natural Right* in that extent: But if I was, I dare say it was a mistake common to me with every individual Person, who ever read the former of your *Accession Sermons*, without knowing any other of your *Lordship's* Sentiments upon that subject, but what are to be met with there. Nay, let any one even now but read page 23. of that *Sermon*; and see, if you do not there express your self, as any one would do, who design'd to speak of *Natural Rights*, in as much latitude as possible. Particularly, let him remark, that your *Lordship* affirms *Inheritance*, by *Primo-geniture*, to be no *Law of Nature*; and that, by *Nature*, all *Children* have *Right alike* to their *Father's real Estate*: and then judge, whether your *Lordship* meant not to speak of *Nature*; as it always was in all times; as well as with respect to the present Age. Besides that I believe no one ever before undertook to speak to this point, what the *Rights of Nature* are, without understanding the *Question* to respect times *past*, as well as *present*; and without being always understood so to do. I hope, therefore, that it was no *Crime* in me, to

understand your *Lordship*, as every Reader did; as without doubt you must have understood me, had I spoken of the *Natural Right to Government* in the same manner: or, understanding your *Lordship* after this manner, to argue with you from your own *Principles*; which hath ever been accounted the most unexceptionable way of arguing.

§. P. 42. I am taxed with *insinuating a Charge against your Lordship*, utterly false, and groundless, in page 325. of the *Considerations*. The Charge which alone I there do (not *insinuate*, but) expressly bring against your *Lordship's* Doctrine, is, the giving the *Supreme Legislative Power*, an *unlimited Authority*, to make what changes that sees fit in the *Form of Government*; and particularly, the giving to our *House of Commons*, chosen by the *People* to maintain our happy Constitution, *Authority to ruine it, if they please; and to consent to the turning it into an absolute Monarchy, &c.* Thus are my words connected. From which it is plain, that I make this the *Instance* in which your *Lordship* gives such *Authority* to the *House of Commons*; that I do not fix upon you, the giving an *Authority* to that House, to do it alone, but to do it by *consenting* with the other parts of the *Legislature* in it. But it becomes me patiently to bear what your *Lordship* sees fit to lay upon me. Now, to pass by that; your *Lordship* answers, that you may have said, that a change made by *Legislators, &c.* is as regularly made, as any such change can be made; and that, being made, it is so far valid, as to bind the *Subjects*. But that you did not say, that every such change, only for its being made by the *Supreme Legislative Power*, must needs have been necessary, just, and reasonable in it self. By which words the Reader must be led to think, that I have taxed your *Lordship* with saying, that all *Alterations* made by the *Supreme Power*, are, for that Reason,

son, *necessary, just, and reasonable*, in themselves: Whereas your *Lordship* knows that I never did any thing like it. But this indeed I have said, That your *Lordship* hath given an *Authority* to the *Supreme Legislative Power*, to make even such *changes*, as are not only *not just, and reasonable* in themselves; but of *fatal Consequence* to the whole *Governed Society*: which is a point vastly different. And least your *Lordship's* *Authority* should influence your *Reader* to believe that this is all *Misrepresentation* in me; and that what you have said, is only this, That *changes* so made, are as *regularly* made, as any such *changes* can be: I must here be forc'd to appeal once more to the *Sermon* it self. And,

1. I might here argue, from the design of your *Lordship* in that *Sermon*, which cannot be answered in the least, without supposing that in those frequent *Declarations*, that the *Legislative Power* may make all *Alterations*, one, as well as another, which to it self shall seem fit, you intended that *may* should signify, *may lawfully*, and agreeably to its *Commission*. Otherwise, your *Lordship* could not have concluded from hence, what you design'd should follow. For it is of no importance, to allege that, The *Supreme Legislative Power* may make any *Alterations*: and this solely in order to prove that they had *Authority* to make one particular *Alteration*: unless by *may*, be understood, *may lawfully, and warrantably*. Put the Case, that I should endeavour to prove that the whole *Nation* might lawfully have resisted a late *Prince*, by first laying it down, that a *Nation* may defend it self from ruine: Could this be to the purpose, unless by *may*, I understand, *may lawfully*? And would not all the *World* have so understood me? Nor can your *Lordship*, indeed, be otherwise understood by any *Reader* that looks into the whole passage.

2. But this is not all. I have not only this *Argument* to urge, in vindication of my self; but your *Lordship's* own express assertions. If the *Reader* will but consult p. 18. of that *Sermon*, he will find these words. *Thus, I think, it is evident, that no change, or alteration, of the form of Government, from one sort to another, is in it self unlawful to be made, provided it be made by them who have power to make it; that is, by the Government it self; I mean, by Him, or Them, who for the time being have the Sovereign Power in their hands.* If he goes on, to page 21. He will find these words. *Whenever therefore the Supreme Power of any Nation undertakes to make any Change in the Established Form of Government, they ought in prudence—to be well assured, that there will be more good than hurt in it: But when they are well satisfied in this, they may then, without breach of Duty, or Justice, make such Alterations therein, as they judge needful. They do no more than they have full Power, and Authority to do, in making such a Change, &c.* Here, my Lord, it is left entirely to the *Legislative Power*, to make what *Alterations* they think fit, so far, as that what *Change* soever, they themselves are satisfied, hath more good than hurt in it, (whether it be really ruine to the *Nation* or not;) they are declared to have not only *Power*, but *Authority*, to make. I will mention but one *Passage* more, in which your *Lordship* recapitulates your own sense, p. 26. in these following words. *Thus, I think, I have made it appear, that this precept, Meddle not with them that are given to change, doth not reach the Duty of Sovereign Powers, who may lawfully make what Charges, and Alterations, in the frame and constitution of the Government, they themselves think fit.* In these *Sentences*, your *Lordship* hath declared, that the *Legislative Powers* may lawfully make any change they see fit; that no change is unlawful to be made, which they

they see fit to make; and that they have *Authority* (this is the very word) to make any *Change*, if so be that *they themselves* be persuaded of the necessity, and expedience, of it. And now, I will appeal to every *Reader*, whether, in this, I brought against your *Lordship*, a *Charge*, utterly *false*, and *groundless*.

There is one thing which, before I leave this matter, I must take notice of: and that is, That your *Lordship* here, p. 45. speaks, as if I contended that no *Alterations* in the *Constitution* cou'd be *Authoritatively* made, without summoning the whole *People* together. But whence your *Lordship* could collect this, I cannot see. I never said any such thing in plain words. All that I have done towards it, is, the maintaining that it is not in their *Commission*, and, that they have no *Authority*, properly so called, to make any *alteration* for the *Ruine* of the *whole Nation*. And I am extremely unfortunate, if it must be admitted for a good *Argument*, that, because I hold that the *Legislators* have no *Authority* to make a *Destructive Alteration*; therefore, I must hold they have no *Authority* to make any that are beneficial: that, because I maintain that they have no *Commission* to make *Laws* to the *Ruine* of the *Nation*; therefore, I must hold that they have no *Commission* to make *useful ones*: that, because I argue against their *Authority* to change this into an *absolute Monarchy*; therefore, I deny them an *Authority* to limit the *Crown* to the *Protestant Succession*. These *Consequences* are so far from being just, that, on the contrary, it unavoidably follows from my *Principles*, and hath been asserted by me in words, that they have a full *Authority* to make all *Alterations* for the security, and happiness of the *Nation*. Yet *these*, and the like *Consequences*, are urged by your *Lordship*, and others who have undertaken

dertaken to vindicate your Cause; as if there were no *Medium* between allowing to *Governours* an *unlimited Authority*, and *no Authority* at all: Or, as if, because I do not allow an *Authority* to make pernicious *Alterations*; therefore, I grant them *no Authority* to make so useful ones, as the *Union* of the two *Kingdoms*; or the *Limitation* of the *Succession*. No, my Lord, I never thus pleaded for the *People*: tho' I have been thus represented. I plead for a *Right*, in the *whole Body*, indeed, to defend it self from *Ruine*, should *Publick Ruine* be Enacted. But in all ordinary, and private *Cases*, I leave the *Government* to determine for them. In all good and beneficial *Laws*, I give *Governours* an *Authority* properly so called: an *Authority*, as great as possible; implied in their *general Commission* to consult the good of the *Public*; and resulting from the manifest *End* of their *Office*. In others, I cannot, because of the *Absurdity*; I dare not, because of the *Blasphemy*. And I am the more free to speak thus, because I have the satisfaction to find your *Lordship* now so far of my *Mind*, as to be unwilling that the *Reader* should think that ever You had given them so *unlimited* an *Authority*: tho' I have been forced, in my own defense, to produce the *Passages* in which you did so. And notwithstanding what your *Lordship* saith p. 45, 46. to which I intreat the *Reader* to have recourse; the only remaining difference between your *Lordship*, and me, seems to be this. Your *Lordship* maintains, with respect to such *Alterations*, and *Laws*, made without *Authority*, as are certainly destructive to the whole *Community*, that there remains no *Defense* in the *whole Body*, but that of *Prayers* and *Tears*: And I, on the contrary, do presume to allow this whole *Community* to defend it self by other means against *Ruine*; tho' coming upon it from those hands, which were entrusted with *Power* only for its preservation.

6. But the greatest Cause of your *Lordship's* Complaint against me, is yet behind. For, *Answer*, p. 51. I am accused of making my *Letter* all of a piece, by ending it, as it began, with a foul, and false Charge upon your *Lordship*, viz. for saying; that your *Lordship* hath assured the *World*, that her Majesty's Title is only that of a successful *Usurpation*. I presume, my *Lord*, No one who hath read what I have in this Paper already said, in my own vindication, will easily call the Charge with which my *Letter* began, a foul, and false Charge. I have proved that it is not a false Charge: And I am very well assured, from the whole tenour of this *Answer*; that your *Lordship* accounts it no foul one, to be taxed with the maintaining such a *Passive Obedience*, as takes away from *Subjects* all right to *Self-defense* against all attempts of their *Governours*. I hope now, with all *submission*, to shew that my *Letter* was all of a piece, ending, as it began, with a Charge which I had but too just reason to make. But before I do this, I shall only beg leave to assure your *Lordship*, that I mentioned not this with the least design of laying any thing to your Charge, which might seem *obnoxious*; or any thing in which many others do not share with your *Lordship*. Alas! my *Lord*, The Government is still treated as a Mere *De Facto* Government, (which I take to be another word for *Usurped*;) by many who take the *Oaths* to it, and who plead for *Submission* to it: And this merely because the whole *Body* of *Subjects* are not allowed, in any *Case*, to make one step, but in the ordinary legal Methods. And finding so many very free without scruple to maintain this to be a *De Facto* Government; that is, in other words, a Government founded upon *Usurpation*; I had not the least suspicion, nor do I now apprehend, that any such Persons stood in need of an *Act* of *Indemnity*, or incurr'd the least penalty by so doing: Nor could I think

think that any, whose *Principles* plainly led to it, would think it *grievous* to have it said so. But I confess, so deep is the sense I have of the publick happiness restored, and established, under God, by the *Revolution*; and so close is the connexion between the present *Settlement*, and that *Resistance* which brought it about: that I cannot help expressing a *concern* against the *Principles* which would bring a disrespect upon *that*; and which, by shaking *that*, must inevitably shake the whole Fabrick built upon it. But I do not design by all this, merely to avoid your *Lordship's* Charge: But come now to the point.

And, in order to my own Justification, I must beg leave to transcribe that whole *Sentence* of mine, of which your *Lordship* hath mention'd only a part. In p. 332. of the *Considerations*, I express a concern, in the following words, to bear a *Man* of your *Lordship's* Character, and Authority, assuring the *World*, that her Majesty's Title is only that of a *successful Usurpation*; that *submission* to her Government, is indeed lawful now it is settled; but that the foundation of that settlement was laid in a *damnable Sin*. In which words of mine, there is not only the Charge it self: but the explication of what I meant in it, is plainly added. For, I do not barely tax your *Lordship* with assuring the *World* that her Majesty's Title is only that of a *Successful Usurpation*, but I add the very way in which You have done this, viz. by assuring them, that tho' *Submission* to her Government be lawful, yet the foundation of it was laid in a *damnable Sin*: Which last words being an explication of the former, if they had been favourably produced by your *Lordship*, as indeed they might have been, would have acquitted me of all *Crime* in saying what I did.

I. Therefore, I answer, that I do no where lay it to your *Lordship's* charge, that you do, in so many words, assure the *World*, that her Majesty's Title

is only that of a successful Usurpation. I appeal to every individual Reader, whether they did, or could, understand me so; or, in any other Sense, but that this is the natural Consequence, the unavoidable Conclusion, from your *Lordship's* Principles, in the manner in which I have there explained my self. I never heard of any Reader who hath so understood me: and therefore I may say, I have never represented your *Lordship* to any Reader, as saying this in so many words. If there be any, as I do not believe there are; I am here ready to declare publicly, that they have mistaken my meaning, by not attending to my own explication: and that your *Lordship* hath never, in so many words, declared her *Majesty's* Title to be that of a *Successful Usurpation*.

2. I appeal to your *Lordship* your self: who, I dare say, notwithstanding all the Concern expressed on this occasion, did not, and cannot, think that I meant to tax you with the saying this in so many words. This is plain enough, from your *Lordship's* declaring against all *Innuendo-proofs*: Which will satisfy every body, that you understood me no otherwise, than as speaking of the *Consequences* of your *Lordship's* Principles. And why then should your *Lordship* expect me to shew, in *what Sermon*, and in *what Page*, you have plainly said these words: when I do not once tax your *Lordship* with saying these words; when no Reader ever, I believe, understood me to tax you with it; nay, when I am fully persuaded, that you your self was all the time inwardly satisfied that I did not mean to do it? There are other ways, my Lord, of assuring the World of this, besides saying plainly these very words. The Men, whose Consciences will not permit them so much as to submit to the *Queen's* Government; That *Writer*, in particular, who, under the bold pretense of vindicating your *Lordship*, hath vented all his spleen against

against our *Establishment*; will not perhaps use these very words. But yet I can't think that they would take it for a *misrepresentation*, should I say, that they have assured the *World*, that her Majesty's Title is only that of a *successful Usurpation*. It is far from my heart to make your *Lordship* responsible for any thing Men of those Principles write, tho' under the covert of your *Great Name*: But I only mention this, that any one may see that my manner of expression here is very justifiable, by all the *Rules* of speaking; tho' your *Lordship*, I verily believe, hath never plainly said those very words.

3. I come now to prove what I said, not to have been groundless, or unjustifiable; viz. that your *Lordship* hath assured the *World*, that her Majesty's Title is only that of a *Successful Usurpation*; in that sense, in which the next words explain it, and in which every one understood me to mean it. And this I shall do, not by *Innuendo's*, but, by plain *Argument*, and *Syllogism*: too obvious to every eye; and differing very much from proof by *Innuendo's*, in the certain, and undeniable conclusiveness of it. My Argument is this. Your *Lordship* hath assured the *World*, that all Resistance is a damnable sin. But the foundation of the present Settlement was laid in Resistance. Consequently, your *Lordship* hath assured the *World*, that the foundation of this Settlement was laid in a damnable Sin. Or again thus. Your *Lordship* hath assured the *World* that all taking Arms, or adhering to those who are in Arms, against their *Sovereign*, is a damnable sin in Subjects. But, Our present Settlement, and the *Queen's* Government, is owing so entirely to this taking up Arms, and adhering to such as were in Arms against the *Sovereign*, that it would have utterly been prevented without it. Consequently, your *Lordship* hath assured the *World*, that the Foundation of the *Queen's* Title was laid in a damnable sin: that is, in other words, is only that

that of a *Successful Usurpation*. Nor do I find that your *Lordship* would even now have it thought, that you have not effectually assured the World, that this *foundation was laid in a damnable sin*. For in this *Answer*, tho' not under the express notion of a *Revolution*, yet, under that of *Resistance*, your *Lordship* hath as amply, and effectually, condemned all the first steps in it, as words can do it. And now, my *Lord*, since this is the *Usurpation* I spake of; since I explained my self thus in the same Sentence, in which I taxed your *Lordship* with this; since the reasoning Men into this persuasion, by laying down such *Premises*, as necessarily, and not by the help of *Innuendo's*, infer such a *Conclusion*, is the most effectual way of *assuring* them of this, and of leaving the impression deep upon their minds: All the *Rules of Speaking*, and of *Syllogism*, will bear me out in the truth of what I alleged; and the great importance of the matter to the *Nation*, will bear me out in taking notice of it.

4. The *Malignant Influences* which the *Principles of Unlimited Non-resistance* reflect back upon the *foundation of the Queen's Government*, and the *Protestant Succession*, will appear the more plainly, if we compare them with the more *benign* and *kindly Influences* of the *contrary*. For, permit us, My *Lord*, only to suppose, for the present, that, on extraordinary Occasions, extraordinary Methods are allowable; permit us only to suppose it lawful, for a *People* to preserve themselves from imminent ruine, by *Methods* not to be justified upon less occasions: And see, if an easy and beneficial *Scheme* doth not present it self to view. For, 1. That very extraordinary occasion, which was apparent to every eye, when we were in the extremest danger of *Popery*, and *Arbitrary Power*, will justify his late *Majesty*, in hearing the Cries, and pitying the Distress, of a *People* in the last pangs of *Life*: in either
kindly

kindly listening to the invitations of as many as had opportunity, and courage, to speak; or Nobly offering the hazard of his own *Life, and Fortunes*, to assist this *Nation* in preserving it self from ruine. 2. The same extraordinary occasion will vindicate from all reproach, the *Conduct* of Her present *Majesty*, then *Princess* of *Denmark*; and add a never-failing lustre to the part which *SHE* bare in the same glorious design: When, moved by a deep sense of the *Miseries* hanging over Her Native *Country*, and by a tender *Compassion* to the present, and succeeding *Generations*, *SHE* generously sacrificed every other consideration to the *Security* of that *People*, in whose *Hearts SHE* now *Reigns*; receiving back again the genuine rewards of Her *past Compassion*, and Her *present Cares*, in the most substantial marks of their sincerest *Love*, and *Gratitude*. 3. This very extraordinary *Occasion* will, likewise, justify the *People* of all *Ranks*, and *Conditions*, from the highest, and holiest *Order*, to the meanest, and most secular *Employment*, in joyning themselves to those *Arms* of the *Prince* of *Orange*, to which we owe the late *Revolution*. 4. The greatness of the occasion will likewise justify the *Lords* for assembling themselves; and the *People* for chusing *Representatives*; to consult what to do in so critical a juncture. 5. The *Experience* of what had been design'd, and put in practice, against the safety of the *Nation*; and the difficulties likely to start up on such an occasion; will give a *Right* to these *Noble Lords*, and *Representatives*, to go out of the ordinary *Methods*, and consent to invest *K. William*, and *Q. Mary*, with the *Supreme Executive Power*. 6. This *Consent* will give an undoubted *Title* to *K. William*, and *Q. Mary*: a *Right* much more apparent, than the *Right* by which most of the *Kings* of this *World* *Reign*. 7. This *Consent*, and the *Necessity* of the *Case*, will give a
true

true and just *Authority*, properly so called, to all the Acts passed by *Them*, and these same *Lords*, and *Commons*, for the Security of the *Public Happiness*: particularly, to that *Act* concerning the *Settlement* and *Limitation* of the *Succession* to the *Crown*, upon which, I think, * your *Lordship* allows the *Queen's Title* to be found- * *Answer. p. 27.* ed. 8. This, consequently, gives an undoubted *Right* to *Her Majesty*: who, by virtue of all these steps, is in the *Throne*; and without them had never been in it. A *Right*, which is equally a glory to *Her self*; and a satisfaction to *Her Subjects*!

On the contrary, supposing no allowance to be given by *Almighty God*; no liberty to be granted, to a *People* once under any *Established Form* of *Government*, to depart from the *settled*, and *General Rule* of *Obedience*; even in order to save themselves from manifest *Ruine*, and *Universal Unhappiness*: Some very hard, and very unkind, *Consequences* will follow from hence; I fear, not to the advantage, either of the *present Settlement* in *general*, or *Her Majesty's Government* in particular. For, 1. The worst of *Reproaches* must fall upon the *Memory* of our *Late Deliverer*: And his *Character* must be drawn, with that of the worst of *Men*, to the greatest disadvantage possible. He must be thought void of all *Apology*, and *Excuse*, to tempt a *Nation* from its *Obedience*; and to save *People* by the *Arms* of *Terror* and *Resistance*, instead of leaving them to their only *Refuge* of *Prayers* and *Tears*. 2. Nor can it fare much better, upon this *Principle*, with our present *Gracious Queen*: who, tho' at that time a *Subject*, yet, thought the safety of a whole *Nation* not unworthy of her regard; and esteemed it a sufficient motive to induce *Her* to encourage, by *Her great Example*, the *Cause*

of just *Liberty*. 3. Neither can any of those be acquitted from guilt, who joyned themselves to the *Prince's Arms*. Neither can the *Lords* be, by this means, justified, in Assembling themselves; or the *People*, for chusing *Representatives*: Since, being all *Mere Subjects*, they had no *Right* to act such a part. 5. Nor would this *Principle* have suffered these *Noble Lords*, and *Representatives*, by their *Consent*, to make a *King*: Since there was *one* in being, whom no *Mismanagement* could devest of his *Right*; and since they themselves, being still but *Subjects*, according to this *Principle*, were not authorized by *God*, to redress the *Grievances*, either of themselves, or their Neighbours, in so extraordinary a manner. 6. Neither would this same *Doctrine* have suffered any *Right* to be convey'd to *K. William*, and *Q. Mary*, to possess the *Government* at that time: or have justified *Them*, in possessing it: or that *Parliament*, in joining with them in any *Acts*. 7. What *Authority* therefore, properly so called, will this *Principle* allow to their *Acts*: which it laboured to prevent; and which it would have prevented, if it had been possible? 8. What influence must it have upon the *present Settlement*, by which Her *Majesty* Reigns: when it leads *People* inevitably to judge that all the *steps* leading to this *Settlement* were displeasing to *God*; contrary to the *Duty* of the *Nation*; inconsistent with the obligations of *Subjects*; and such as, even under this very *Settlement*, deserve in the most public and solemn manner to be condemned; and their *Defenders* and *Adherents* to be anathematized by the *Preachers* of the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ*?

Let any one but sedately compare these two *Schemes* together; and he will not be long determining, which *Principle* it is that hath the best influence upon our present happy *Settlement*: Nor will

will he, I believe, doubt to justify me for saying that They, who allow no *Right* to the *People* thus to go out of the ordinary settled *methods*, upon the greatest occasion, cannot possibly allow any better Title to the *present Settlement*, than that of a *successful Usurpation*. Thus, my Lord, I humbly hope, I have given some tolerable account of what I fixed upon your *Lordship*: and this, not by *Innuendo's*; but by way of plain, necessary, unavoidable *Conclusion*, drawn, without artifice, or the least straining, from your avowed *Principles*.

This was the *Second Point* I undertook, in this *new Trouble*, which I am forced to give your *Lordship*, viz. To review all those *Passages*, in which You complain that I have been guilty of *Misrepresentation*; or something worse. And having gone over every particular instance, minutely, and distinctly; as being much less willing to be thought Criminal in such a point, than merely *Erroneous* in all others: I have nothing farther to add to this necessary, and plain *Self-Defense*.

III. I come now to consider again those Points, which your *Lordship* hath endeavoured to defend against the Arguments which I presumed to urge against them.

First. In the *Considerations*, p. 310. I am arguing against your inferring from the *Magistrate's* being the *Minister of God*, that he is, on that account, in such sense, *Supreme*, as that none upon Earth can lawfully *Question, Censure, Punish*, or *Resist* him; * which last your * *Ser. 1708. p. 7.*

Lordship is careful to join, to the foregoing words, in the same *Argument*; by which it appears, what sort of *Questioning, Censuring, or Punishing*, your *Lordship* meant. Against this, I urg'd,

1. That he is declared to be, not barely the *Minister of God*; but the *Minister of God to us, for good*. Supposing him, therefore, ordain'd immediately by *God*, for the good of *Society*; it will not follow that He is *unaccountable* to any upon *Earth*, in attempting the *Ruine of Humane Society*: any more than it will follow, that being *ordained* for the *Good*, He was likewise *ordained* for the *Ruine*, of Mankind. I am sorry to find your *Lordship* of another Mind. † But I can never

† *Ans. p. 12.* ver be able to conceive that a *Commission* given to any Man, merely for the doing good to *others*, should make him so absolutely unaccountable, that they might not *Feel* and *Censure* Him, as going to Ruine them; and *Punish* him, as far as is necessary for *Self-defense*, in those *Cases*, in which He, who gave him this *Commission*, either is not able; (as an *Earthly Governour* often is not;) or hath never promised to interpose himself. Nor does this at all make the *Governours*, the *Governed*: which is all that your *Lordship* advanceth against it. For this *Censuring*, and *Punishing*, are not *Acts of Civil Government*: but *Acts*, necessary to, and inseparable from, a *Right to Self-defense*, and *Self-preservation*. Thus, therefore, I say. Supposing the *Commission* to *Princes*, came from *God*, in such manner, that the words of it were written by his Finger, so as to be seen and read by all; and this *Commission* were entirely limited to the *Good* of the *Society*: This would not take from the *Governed Society* a *Right to feel*, when He was acting against that *Commission*; or to *Censure*, and *Punish*, Him, when He was attempting their Ruine, so far as should be necessary for their own Preservation. His being the *Minister of God, for good*, to them, consider'd by it self, would not do this. Nor would their exercising this *Right*, upon a most pressing necessity, make them the *Governours* of their *Princes*;

or suppose them *Commissioned* by God Almighty, to be the *Civil Governours* of their *Civil Governour*: Which is the *Absurdity*, your *Lordship* would fix upon it. But, in this *Case*, the *Final*, *Judicial*, *Censure*, and *Punishment*, would remain to God Almighty, from whom immediately the *Commission* came: and yet there would remain to the *Society*, a *Right* to such *Censure*, and *Punishment*, as are inseparable from a *Right* to *Self-Preservation*. Thus, even upon this highest Supposition, God, might, I hope, be acknowledged by me, *without a complement*, (as your *Lordship* expresseth it,) the only *Ruler* of *Princes*, even whilst I am contending for such a *Right* in the *Ruled Society* to consult their *Self-Preservation*, as implies in it a sort of *Censure*, and *Punishment*; and cannot be exercised without it.

2. My *Second Argument* is drawn from hence, that every Person who performs an Office beneficial to us, is the *Minister of God* to us, for good: And consequently, that the *Magistrate's* being call'd by St. Paul the *Minister of God*, is not, of it self, sufficient to prove him unaccountable. For I must observe that this was your *Lordship's* Argument. The *Supreme Civil Magistrate* is the *Minister of God*: And therefore, unaccountable. The Point to be proved was, that He is unaccountable. The *Medium*, by which your *Lordship* appear'd to me to design to prove it, was, his being the *Minister of God*; and called so by St. Paul. My Answer was, that this alone cannot be sufficient: because many others may very properly be called *Ministers of God*; who yet are not unaccountable. To this now your *Lordship* replies. p. 13. that you considered the *Magistrate*, as the *Highest Power* upon *Earth*: and, from St. Paul's affirming, that He, as such, is the *Minister of God*; or that He hath a *Commission* from God to exercise the highest Power; you still think the *Inference* very just. To this I beg leave to answer,

That St. Paul doth not affirm that the *Highest Civil Magistrate*, considered as the *Highest*, is the *Minister of God*; but that the *Magistrate*, considered as the *Magistrate*, whether *Supreme*, or *Subordinate*, is the *Minister of God*: as your *Lordship* in other places acknowledges. And, that I did understand your *Argument* aright, is plain from hence, that, unless the force of it lies in his being the *Minister of God*; (which was the Point your *Lordship* was then speaking to, and which is frequently mentioned in the management of it;) his being the *Minister of God* can bear no part in it, so as to help to form the conclusion at all: As it is plain, you design'd it should. The *Argument*, as now represented, is this, *Answer* p. 13. *For if*, saith your *Lordship*, *He holds the highest Power upon Earth, by Commission from God; and to Question, Censure, and Punish, be Acts of Power, (as I truly take them to be,) then, I think it does very plainly follow, That none but God can Question, and Punish, Him: Because there is none upon Earth that is, or can be, higher than the highest Power upon Earth.* Now, to shew that, as you have now model'd this *Argument*, it receives no force at all from his being the *Minister of God*, or having his *Commission* from *God*; (which was the point then under your consideration, and which even now your *Lordship* hath here inserted;) I only beg leave to suppose that his *Commission* came from the *People*, and to observe that the *Inference*, here made, is as just, upon that *Supposition*, as upon the other. *For if He holds the highest Power upon Earth, let it be by Commission from the People, or how it will; and to Question, Censure, and Punish, be acts of Power; then, I think it very plainly follows, That there is none upon earth to Question, Censure, and Punish him: because there is none upon Earth that is, or can be, higher than the highest Power upon Earth.* This makes it evident, that your *Lordship's* present *Argument* doth indeed
 turn

turn intirely upon His being the *Highest Power*; and upon the impossibility of there being any *higher Power* than the *Highest*: but at the same time, it makes it evident likewise, that it is quite altered from what it was before. However, that I may not seem wholly to neglect your *Lordship's Argument*, as now drawn up; I say again, upon the highest supposition possible, that, tho' the *Supreme Magistrate* be in possession of the highest *Civil Authority*, and that by *Commission* from *God*, in order to the *Temporal Happiness* of the *Governed Society*; yet, it doth not follow, that He is therefore above all humane *Censure*, and *Punishment*: because *Censure*, and *Punishment*, are not always *Acts* of a *Superiour* relation, or of *Power*, as it is used here for *Authority*; but *Acts*, in many Cases, inseparable from *Self-Defense*, and *Self-Preservation*: and because this *Governour's* having by *Divine Commission* the *Highest Authority*, for the good of this *Society*, doth not take away from this *Society* the *Right* to defend it self from *Ruine*, *Devastation*, and *Misery*.

3. My *Third Argument* was drawn from *Ecclesiastical Ministers* receiving their *Commission* from *God*, to this effect, *As their being Commissioned by God doth not exempt them from Censure, and Punishment, in whatever they think fit to say, or do, under pretense of this Commission: so likewise neither will the Supreme Magistrate's being Commissioned by God for the good of his Subjects, prove any such exemption for Him, in whatever He may do under pretense of that Commission.* This plainly proceeds again, upon my understanding your *Lordship* to argue, from his receiving his *Commission* from *God*, to an *unlimited exemption* from all *Censure*, and *Punishment*. Nor do you seem to deny the force of the *Argument* thus framed. To this I added my Observation upon your *Lordship's Instance*; and urged it to this effect, That, as a *Mayor's* being *Commissioned* by the *King* for that *Office*, doth not exempt

Him from such *Censure*, and *Punishment*, from the governed part of the *Corporation*, as in some Cases is absolutely necessary to *Self-preservation*: so, neither will the *Supreme Magistrate's* being *Commissioned by God*, for the *Office of Supreme Magistrate*, exempt Him, in all Cases, from such *Humane Censure*, or *Punishment*, as is implied in that *Right to Self-preservation*, which the *Governed Society* still enjoy. To all this, your *Lordship* replies,

1. By charging me with *Manifest falsification* in arguing, as if You had put the matter upon the *Magistrate's* being *Commissioned by God*; or being the *Minister of God*: whereas You put it upon his being the *Supreme*, or *Highest*, *Power*; and did not ground it at all upon that *Phrase*, p. 20. Now, 1. Were this so; the most that could be made of this would be, that I had been guilty of a *mistake*, and a very innocent mistake. 2. I do not deny that your *Lordship* mentions the *Supreme*, or *Highest* *Power*: But, if You grounded your *Argument* only upon his being the *Supreme*; then you forsook *St. Paul* in this, who grounds his *Conclusion* for *Submission*, both to *Supreme*, and *Subordinate*, upon the *Magistrate's* being the *Minister of God* to us for good. *St. Paul* doth not argue from his being the *Highest*; (for He is speaking of all :) but from his being the *Minister of God*. And therefore, it might have been pardonable in me to understand your *Lordship* so; as urging the *Apostle's* *Argument*: Because it was from Him, and from this very expression, that You undertook to speak upon this Subject. 3. Either the *Argument* was founded upon the *Magistrate's* being the *Minister of God*; or it had not the least relation to the point there proposed by your *Lordship*: which was expressly this, (Not, what was implied in his being the *Highest Civil Power*, but) what was implied in this *Highest Civil Power's* being call'd the *Minister* of

of God, as any one may see, *Sermon*, p. 6. And if your *Lordship* did not mean to argue this point from his being *Commissioned* by God; but wholly from another consideration, viz. his being the *Highest*; then this *Conclusion* would hardly have been brought in, under that *Head*, in which you propose to speak of the *Magistrate's Authority*, and *Commission*, coming from God: Nor would mention have been made of his being the *Minister of God*, and *Commissioned* by Him, all through the *Argument*; as I find it. For if it be *only*, from his being the *Highest Power*, that this is argued; the *Argument* seems entirely to turn upon the word *Highest*: which indeed is not used by St. Paul. And the *Conclusion* drawn from hence, as well as from the supposed absurdity of making *Governours* the *Governed*, might be just the same, if the *Commission* came only from the *People*: Which was a point your *Lordship* was manifestly opposing. 4. Your *Lordship*, in the Case of *Elective Monarchies*, particularly makes the observation, That, tho' the *nomination* be from Men; yet the *Authority* and *Commission*, are from God. And this being said on purpose, lest Men should imagine that, in *Elective Kingdoms*, the *Electors* still might retain a *Right* to Censure, and Punish, *Mismanagement*, cannot at all serve to this *End*; unless You meant to argue against this, from the *King's* receiving his *Commission* from God, and not from the *Electors*. This again induced me, so to understand your *Lordship*: Not thinking that You would make so express mention, in your *Argument*, of his being *Commissioned* by God; without designing to lay the force of your *Conclusion* upon that. 5. Your *Lordship*, before you come to the *Instance*, by which you design to illustrate this matter, *Serm.* p. 8. proposeth to shew, that the *Sovereign Power upon Earth* is *subject only to God*, even in *Elective Kingdoms*, only, by directing us to *Instances* of

of the like nature: wherein the Officer hath his Nomination from one, and receives his Authority from another; and is accountable, for the exercise of his Power, only to him, from whom He received his Commission. 6. When your Lordship comes to a particular Instance, you plead a Mayor's exemption from the Censure, and Punishment, of the Corporation, merely from his being the Queen's Minister; and his being accountable only to Her, merely from his acting by her Commission. Now, if this Instance, and the words before it, now quoted, were designed by You to illustrate this matter of the Supreme Magistrate's being exempt from all Censure, and Accountableness; then your Lordship did argue for this exemption, from the Magistrate's having his Commission from God. But it is plain, You did so design this Instance; and the preceding words. Therefore, I leave it to any one, to judge whether it was so much as a mistake, in me, so to understand this Argument; and whether your Lordship grounded this Unaccountableness only upon his being the Supreme Magistrate; and not at all upon his being called, by St. Paul, the Minister of God: As you are here pleased to affirm, to my great surprise.

Add to this, that when your Lordship goes on to strengthen what hath been before said, you do it by proving, from the nature of the thing, that the Authority of the Magistrate must come from God, or that He must be God's Minister in your sense of the words, p. 9. The following Inferences likewise are drawn from his being the Minister of God; Amongst which is the Inference relating to Non-resistance. From whence it again appears, that this was the principal point in your thoughts; and the main support of your Argument.

2. Your Lordship not only makes me guilty of falsifying this Argument; but likewise all the way insinuates, that you were speaking, throughout this Argument, only of a Judicial Censuring, and Punishing;

or

or a *Sitting in Judgment* upon the *Chief Magistrate*. To this I have sufficiently answered, under the *Second Head* of this *Reply*.

And now, having answered to these two *Charges*, I crave leave to observe, that, your *Lordship* having not been pleased to allege any thing to the contrary, my *Arguments* stand good, by which I endeavoured to prove, that the *Supreme Magistrate's* being the *Minister of God*, or immediately Commissioned by Him, will not, consider'd by it self, prove that He is exempt, in some possible Cases, from that *Censure*, and *Punishment*, which are necessarily implied in that *Self-preservation*, and *Self-defense*, which the *Governed Society* have a Right to regard. And I desire it may be remembered, that, as in the Case of the *Mayor* of a *Corporation*, the final Judicial Acquittance, or Condemnation, of him, for his Behaviour during his *Office*, belongs to the *King*, or *Queen*, and their *Courts*; but still the *Censure*, and *Punishment*, implied in *Self-defense*, remains in the *Corporation*, in those Instances in which immediate Ruine, without their interposition, is evident: So, likewise, in the Case of a *Civil Governour*, supposed to have his *Commission* from God himself, the final Judicial Acquittance, or Condemnation, of him, for all his Behaviour, under the pretense of this *Commission*, may belong to *Almighty God*; but, notwithstanding this, the *Censure*, and *Punishment*, inseparable from *Resistance*, may, in some Cases, remain to the *Governed Society*, by virtue of that *Right to Self-preservation*, which God *Almighty* doth by no means take away, when He gives a *Commission* to a *Governour*, on purpose to *preserve*, and *defend* them.

I did likewise, under the same Head, argue from the *Supreme Magistrate's* not acting with God's *Authority*, properly so called, any farther than He acts agreeably to God's *Commission*; and from his having no *Superiority*, in those Instances, in which

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He acts *without*, or *against*, his Commission. This your *Lordship* seems to allow, p. 15. but adds, that all that follows from hence, is, *that his Subjects are not bound to Obey him in those Instances; (which is what, you say, you have more than once granted in that Sermon;)* but it doth not therefore follow, that He thereby so ceaseth to be a Magistrate, as that henceforward his Subjects are not bound to obey him in any thing. God forbid, it should! I am sure, I never said, or thought, any thing like it. Nay, I have gone farther than your *Lordship* doth in this place. For here you infer, that his Subjects are not oblig'd to obey him in those instances, in which He is without Authority, properly so call'd. Whereas, if they be such instances, as are of an indifferent nature, tho' not belonging to his Office; if they be such, as are prejudicial to Private Men only; nay, or to the interest of the Public, so it be not in a very great degree: In these Instances, even I, who am represented as an Enemy to *Magistracy*, press the continuance of Obedience, from the consideration of *Public Good*; and the general usefulness of the *Governing Office*, according to St. Paul's Argument. This same *Public Good* indeed, is the strongest Argument against *Submission*, when *Universal Ruine* is threatned. But all that I intended, was to take away that reproach from Religion, of giving God's Authority to the *Mistakes*, or *Tyranny*, of *Governours*; and to fix our active Obedience, as far as it is consistent with the *Public Good*, upon its true foundation. Besides, your *Lordship* having argued for an *Unlimited Exemption* from Punishment by Resistance, from *Magistrates* being *Supreme* by their Commission; nothing could be more natural, or more proper, than to observe, that this Argument could prove an Exemption from that Resistance, in no Instances, but those in which they had this Supremacy: and consequently, not a total, unlimited, Exemption; that

that this *Supremacy* vanisheth, when it becomes inconsistent with the *Preservation*, and *Defense*, of the *Governed Society*; which hath then a *Right* to that sort of *Censure*, and *Punishment*, which is implied in the *Right* of *Self-preservation*. Of which, I see not that your *Lordship* hath taken any notice: but rather hath chosen to argue upon other Points, in which I am not at all concerned.

4. Another *Objection*, which I brought against your reasoning, was taken from St. Paul's calling the *Inferior*, as well as *Supreme*, *Magistrate*, the *Minister* of God. This your *Lordship* allows. From whence I argue, That the being the *Minister* of God, consider'd by it self, will no more prove the *Supreme*, than the *Inferior*, absolutely exempt. And by what *Argument* is it, that You will prove that St. Paul did not mean *this* to be understood in the same sense of both, which He useth of both, without the least distinction? But you say, that every one, except my self, might have seen, you were speaking of the *Supreme Magistrate*. I am sure, I always so understood you: But, your *Lordship's* Argument, taking its rise from St. Paul's calling the *Magistrate* the *Minister* of God; what more proper, than to observe that, this expression being us'd of *Subordinate*, as well as *Supreme*, without any distinction, nothing can be inferr'd, merely from hence, in favour of the *Supreme*, which may not likewise be inferr'd in favour of the *Subordinate*. This is all I ever intended by this *Observation*; and not to represent St. Paul, as *excepting* the *Supreme Magistrate*, and not so much as *thinking of the Roman Emperour*: Which yet any one would imagine, I had done, who reads the 27 p. of your *Lordship's Answer*. What I have said, therefore, on this head, I now make bold to say again, that, tho' *Public Good* may furnish us with many Arguments to prove a greater *Exemption*

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tion, in the *Supreme*, than in the *Subordinate Magistrates*: Yet, *St. Paul* having spoken of all together in one breath; the *Higher*, or *Eminent Powers*; (the same with all in *Authority*, or *Eminence*, in another place) the *Ordinance of God*, the *Minister of God*, being said of the *Lowest Degree* of *Magistrates*, as well as of the *Highest*; no *Unaccountableness*, no *Submission*, no degree of *Non-resistance*, can be inferred, merely from the expressions here used, with respect to the *Highest*, which may not with equal force be infer'd from them, with respect to the *Lower* and *Subordinate*. For He is not here considering them under the notion of *Highest*, and *Lowest*; but as all together managing a most Godlike, and Beneficent, Office in the World.

5. With respect to what I urged in the *fifth place*, that the *Right of Self-defense* was the thing mainly contended for, by *others*; and, not at all, under that express notion, *touched upon*, by your *Lordship*; I have already given a full and sufficient demonstration, that, under the colour of such words, as *Unaccountable*, *Exempt from Censure*, and *Punishment* and the like, applied to *Governours*, your *Lordship* meant effectually to devest the *Governed* from all *Right to Real Self-defense*. And I now observe, that You do not here so much as attempt to shew that your *Arguments*, tho' designed for that purpose, are of strength enough to prove the *Civil Magistrate* exempt from such *Humane Censure*, and *Punishment*, as are inseparable from this *Right to Self-defense*. From whence it appears, both that my *Fifth* reason was very much to the purpose; and that it still remains in its full force. Thus much, in *vindication* of what I before offered against your *Lordship's* Argument, for the *Unlimited Exemption* of the *Civil Magistrate*, founded, as I thought, and as I still think, upon his being the *Minister of God*.

Secondly, I now beg leave to consider again, what I presumed to offer against your *Lordship's* judgment

judgment concerning the *Original of Civil Government.*

1. My first Argument was to this effect, If a Man hath such Power over his own Life, as that He may lawfully contract, and by that Contract be obliged, when the *Public Good* requires it, to give it up; then the *Authority of Civil Governours* may come from this *contract*. I instanced in a *Soldier*: who by his *contract* is oblig'd to venture, where He is sure to lose his Life, at his *General's* Command. Permit me here just to observe, that the word *Venture*, by the Power of Custom, is not only used *where there is an hazard, or uncertainty*; but also signifies simply to *Dare*; as may be seen in our *Dictionaries*. Which is hardly worth the mentioning, but that your *Lordship* thought it worth your Censure. But to the *Argument*, your *Lordship* answers, that a *Soldier* is not *sure* of Death in the *Field of Battle*. Nor did I say, he was. But, in some other *Cases*, He may: Which I am sure may be well supposed, if they have not really in fact happened. Nay, in the very *Field of Battle*, He is obliged to persist in his opposition to the *Enemy*, and not to give back so as to endanger the *Victory*, even at that time when he sees, and feels, Death to be inevitable; as inevitable, as if an *Executioner* were to give the stroke. Nor doth your *Lordship* seem to me, in another place, much to doubt of this *Right*. For when I prosecute the same *Argument*, by saying that a Man, in some *Cases*, may run voluntarily upon inevitable Death, for the safety of his Neighbours, &c. You grant this: But You say that this results, *not from his having a power over his own Life; but from God's having somewhere said, antecedently to any Original Contract made at Horeb, that we ought to lay down our Lives for the Brethren*. Now, if your *Lordship* means that this results from an *immediate Revelation* made of his Will, in this particular; this was
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was not made a part of *Revelation*, as I know of, till many Hundreds of years after God's taking upon himself the *Government* of the *Jews* at *Horeb*: viz. 1 *John* 3. 16. But if your *Lordship* means, that this was a dictate of *Reason*, and true *Honour*; which is the voice of *God*; (as I suppose, you must mean:) this is all I contend for; That Men, by that *Reason* which God hath endowed them with, are taught that they have this Power over their own lives, delegated to them by their *Supreme Lord*, when He made them reasonable and sociable Creatures. So that in Men, endowed with *Reason* by *God* their Maker, there is this Power: and it is a true judgment of their *Reason*, that they may lawfully make use of it. But, after having in other words granted what I contended for, your *Lordship* saith, that this doth not come up to the point: which was, that the *Magistrate* hath a Power to put a *Murderer* to Death; which the *Murderer* at that time hath not over himself. But to this I answer, that, tho' a *Condemned Murderer* may not have this Power over his own Life; yet, this very Man might have so much Power over it, as to contract at first with the *Magistrate*, that, when the *Public Good* required it, his Life should be given up: Which alone is sufficient to the Point I was upon, viz. That the *Authority* of the *Magistrate* to take away the Life of this *Murderer*, when *Public Good* should require it, might be founded upon a *Contract*, in which this very Man bore a part. But your *Lordship* infers from hence, that the *Magistrate* hath more Power over this Man's Life, than he himself hath; or would have had, in my imaginary state of Nature: Which consequently cannot come from this Man, p. 24. I observe, therefore,

2. That, after I had declared that the point did not depend upon Men's having Power over their own Lives; if so be they appear to have *Originally* a Power, in some particular instances, over the lives of

of others; I argued, in the next place, that, tho' the *Magistrate* may have more Power over this *Murderer's* Life than *He* himself hath, or ever had; yet, *He* hath not more Power over it, than the rest of the *Society* have originally in themselves. For instance, Let *Cain* be the *Murderer*: And this, at a time when all *Mankind* were within the compass of no very extensive *Neighbourhood*. I say, Every man must have had such a Power over the *Life* of *Cain*, that, in cold Blood, whenever they met him, they might have used him as a *Common Enemy*; as one who would, upon a like occasion, Murder any of them, as *He* had his Brother *Abel*: And that whoever had so used him, (I speak, without supposing Almighty God to have interposed,) would have been a *Public Benefactor*. In which *Sentence*; (that I may not seem to neglect your *Lordship's Questions*;) I understand, by a *Common Enemy*, not only one, who hath been guilty of a *Crime* which nearly toucheth *Humane Society*: but one, of whom they can have no security against the like to come, and likewise one, whose Punishment is necessary for the common Safety, and for the terror of any like minded. And, by a *Benefactor*, I understand, not one who only doth a thing Beneficial in the Event: but, one that doth a Beneficial thing, by lawful means; and in a lawful, and warrantable manner. Such an one do I maintain that Person to be, who kills this *Murderer*: And a *Benefactor*, in this same sense, (pardon me this one Instance of my Zeal,) do I account our *Late Deliverer* to have been; not to be Register'd by me in the List with *Judas*, and *Pilate*; amongst those who do things, Beneficial in the Event, by unlawful means: but in that Noble List of such as have sacrificed all their *Temporal Ease*, and *Quiet*, to save whole Nations, by lawful means; and in a lawful, and warrantable manner. Your *Lordship* will easily see the Reason why I here speak this: And I wish I could hide it from every

other Reader. But, now to return; your *Lordship* would ask this Man, whom I call a *Public Benefactor*, to shew his *Warrant*, for taking away the Life of this *Murderer*: as, in the like Case, the *Magistrate* can do his, being declared in *Scripture* to be a *Revenger* to execute wrath. If your *Lordship* here means a *Scripture-warrant*, or a *Warrant* by express Revelation, as one would think by these words; I answer, that Thousands of years had passed before this *Scripture-warrant* was penn'd; that the *Heathen Magistrates*, in all parts of the World, had no such *Warrant* to shew; neither have at this day: that, during all that time, and since, in the unenlighten'd parts of the World, any *Magistrate* might as well have been asked for his *warrant*. For even, supposing that He had, in your *Lordship's* sense, a *warrant* from *God*; yet He could not know whither to have recourse, for it: And perhaps, would have appealed only to the power lodged in Him by the *Community*. If your *Lordship* means a *warrant* from the light of Reason, and the nature of the thing; as no other can be, in this Instance, expected: I think there is sufficient *Warrant*, and sufficient *Evidence*, of it. Nor doth your *Lordship* attempt to say any thing against this *Argument*; but that some of his *Neighbours* may perhaps take him for as great a *Malefactor* as the *Murderer* himself. To which I reply, that if they should, they would shew themselves *Enemies* to *Mankind*; and of a very bad Spirit: And their Crime would be like the Crime of those Men, who, being without Revelation, and ignorant of *God's* express approbation of the *Magistrate's Office* made known in it, should rise up against the *Magistrate* as a *Malefactor*, for having put to Death a Man guilty of *Murder*.

What I said, under this Head, your *Lordship* avoids, because, you say, I found it upon a *Right* of *Self-preservation*, which is not at all to the point you
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are *discouraging* of, in your *Sermon*. With submission, my Lord, the point You were arguing against, and which I was here treating of, was the *Humane Original of Civil Government*. And, if it be implied in the *Right of Self-preservation*, that a *Neighbourhood* of Men, before a *Magistrate* is fixed; amongst them, have such a *Right* over a *Company* of *Robbers*, as the *Magistrate* himself hath, after *He* is fixed; which is the Instance I give, p. 317: Then, this ought to be considered, because it is an *Argument* against what your *Lordship* expressly, and in words, asserted. For, supposing that you might avoid what I said, in the first part of the *Considerations*, about *Self-defense*; as a thing not touched upon by your *Lordship*: yet, the *Case* is very different here, where you expressly assert that there is not, originally, either in single Men, or in a *Community* of *Men*, that right to punish *Evil-doers*, which is in the *Magistrate*. Against this, I argue from this Instance of a *Band of Destroyers* coming down upon a place, where there is not a *Civil Magistrate* settled; the *Inhabitants* of which place have a *Right* to go out against these; to do what they can to kill them; or, if they take any of them, to put them to death, even in cool blood, for a *Terror* to the rest: Which is all that a *General*, or a *Magistrate*, can do, when *He* is established amongst them. This is not fixing any thing upon your *Lordship*, which you have not spoken of; but arguing directly against your assertion: And therefore, either the force of it is to be acknowledged; or the *weakness* of it to be shew'n.

Another observation of your *Lordship's* against this *Position*, that the *Power* of the *Magistrate* comes from *Men*, is, that it is directly contrary to what the *Apottle* affirms, viz. *That there is no Power, but of God*. In answering to this, I did suppose that your *Lordship* here meant that it was contrary to the true meaning of these words; or to these words

rightly understood: and not merely to the words, without any determinate meaning affixed to them. But your *Lordship* seems to take it amiss: and you ask, *Where have I interpreted those words of the Apostle?* To which, give me leave to answer, that you could not affirm the *Position* before mentioned to be contrary to the *Apostle's* Affirmation; without putting a sense upon the words contrary to that *Position*: And this is interpreting the words. As, when a *Roman Catholic* faith, that the *Protestant Doctrine* about the Sacrament is directly contrary to what our Saviour affirms, *This is my Body*; He puts an interpretation, or a sense upon these words, contrary to the *Protestant Doctrine*. And had I not understood your *Lordship* thus, surely I might well be taxed with little respect to you; to suppose that you only meant to observe, that that *Position* is contrary to the sound of St. Paul's words: which your *Lordship* must have meant; unless you put an interpretation upon them; but which signifies nothing to the Cause in hand. Yet is your *Lordship* here endeavouring, p. 28. to make the Reader believe that it was only the words of St. Paul, without any interpretation, that you had your Eye to. For you say, *I only barely cite the words, I only simply affirm, that that position is directly contrary to them. And, after this, that the Reader may the better judge, you present the matter in this view.*

Rom. 13 1.

There is no power
but of God: the powers
that be are ordained of
God.

The Position.

The Sovereign Power of the Supreme Magistrate is derived to Him from the aggregate Body of the People, as by their Grant, or Concession.

Now here, one of these two things must be true; Either that your *Lordship* interprets these words so,

as

as that by *Power*, and *Powers*, shall be understood *Magistratical Authority*; and by being *ordained of God*, shall be understood, coming by *Commission* from *Him*, and not from *Men*, who have no such *Authority* to give; and then indeed the *Position* contradicts what you understand to be affirmed by *St. Paul*: Or, that you allege the *words* only, without any determinate sense to them.

If the *former* of these be true; then I am not to be blamed, for supposing that your *Lordship* put a *sense* upon these words: And then the only point had been, not to have produced the words; but, to have proved *that* to have been the only true *interpretation*. For till that be done, any one who thinks the *Persons of Governours* to be here spoken of, as many *Learned Men* do; and will but interpret, *ordained of God*, as highly with respect to *them*, as your *Lordship* doth in your way; may shew the same contradiction between your own *Position*, and these *words*, by representing it after the same manner.

Rom. 13. 1.
There is no power
but of God: the powers
that be are ordained
of God.

Your *Lordship's Position*.]
Governours are not ordained of
God, but are entirely depending upon
the *Laws and Constitutions* of several
Countries, i. e. the *Will of Men*.

If the *latter* be true, that your *Lordship* meant only that, in *sound*, these words contradict the *fore-mentioned position*; I answer that there is no such thing, as contradicting the *sound of words*, without any particular meaning put upon them: A *contradiction* being nothing, but with respect to particular *positions*, with such and such determinate meanings affixed to the words of them. If this be not so; some of the truest *Positions* in the World may

be said to contradict some Text of Scripture, or other. For instance, The Position of Protestants is, That the *Sacramental Bread*, is not the *Body of Christ*; as the *Papists* understand it. This, saith a *Papist*, is directly contrary to what our Lord affirms. For this purpose, He may only cite the words; and only simply affirm that it is so; and present the matter in this view.

Matth. 26. 26.

The Position.

This is my Body. | *This is not the Body of Christ: but Bread.*

And he may add your Lordship's words that follow here. If the Reader doth not see a contradiction between these two Assertions; I can't help his Eyesight, nor his Understanding. I make no gloss at all upon the Text. I give no studied, and elaborate, interpretations of it. That belongs to those to do, who would have it thought that there is not a contradiction between that Text, and this Position.

The like Method may be taken in the following Instances.

Texts of Scripture.

Positions.

Swear not at all.

It is Lawful to Swear upon some occasions.

Children obey your Parents in all things.

Children obey not your Parents in all things.

I say unto you, Resist not evil.

It is Lawful to resist evil, in some Cases.

But now, if the Positions were a little otherwise expressed; the Contradiction would not appear to be any real Contradiction. As for instance,

Matt. 26. 26.

Position.

This is my Body.

| *This is Bread; called the Body of Christ, not in a literal, but figurative, sense.*

So,

So, with respect to the *Position* opposed by your *Lordship*.

Rom. 13. 1.

The *Position*.

There is no Power but of God: The Powers that be are ordained of God.

The Authority of Civil Governours came originally from Agreement of Men: Said here to be ordain'd of God; as it is agreeable to his Will, that Civil Governours should have this Authority.

For, all the Contradiction between this *Position*, and St Paul's Affirmation, is this, that they who maintain this *Position*, understand St. Paul's words, *being ordain'd of God*, in a *Sense* consistent with that *Position*, and a sense justifiable by other places of *Scripture*. And *He* doth not really contradict a *Text* of *Scripture*, who allows it in that *Sense*, which alone appears to be consistent with the nature of things; and which can be defended by the common usage of words. But I have said enough to this Point: and, I fear, too much. But in saying thus much, I have likewise given an account, that this expression may be used both of the *Persons*, and *Authority*, of *Governours*; as your *Lordship* saith it must have reference to the *Roman Emperours*: of their *Persons*, without implying in it, either that *God* expressly nominated them, or so much as always approved of the *methods* in which they came to the *Government*; and of their *Authority*, without implying that it did not come immediately from *Mankind*, whom *God* himself made *Reasonable* and *Sociable* Creatures. Which sufficiently excuseth me from what your *Lordship* seems to expect of me, p. 30. because I never denied that the *Apostle* did here affirm the *Magistrate's Authority* to be *ordain'd of God*; but only desired the liberty to understand that expression after a manner different from your *Sense* of it; and as justifiable, by all *Rules* of *Interpretation*. And since your *Lord-*

ship, would not understand this of the *Persons* of those in *possession* of *Power*, any otherwise, than as they come to that *possession*, under the inspection of *God's Providence*: I thought I might be allowed a like latitude in interpreting it with respect to the *Authority*, properly so called, of *Persons* in *Power*. I only add, that I am still of the same Mind, that, if the *Authority* of the first *Roman Emperours*; of *Him*, for Instance, under whom our *Saviour* was born; or of *Him*, under whom he suffered; or of *Him*, under whom *St. Paul* wrote this; must be understood to be conveyed immediately from *God*, in the highest Sense: then, I see not but that mere *Force* may convey a *Right*; and demand a *Divine Commission* properly so called. For what *prescription*, which the *Republic* had so long on its side; or what *Authoritative Legal Act* of the whole *Constitution*, the first *Emperours* had on their side; (which your *Lordship* saith, ought to be looked on as the *best Titles*;) it will be hard to determine: Or indeed what better Title, than that of *Mere Possession*.

I can think of nothing alleged by your *Lordship*, in Relation to the *Divine Commission* of *Princes*; which I have not considered: unless it be, your professing to argue from that expression, *Prov. 8. 15. By me Kings Reign*; the very next words to which are these, *And Princes decree Justice*. Now 1. *Solomon* is not here speaking of *God*: but of *Wisdom*; called *Understanding*, v. 14. of *Wisdom* possessed by *God*, v. 22. and by which He acts. Nor can this be possibly understood of any but *Wise Kings*: because no others Reign by *Wisdom*; or of any, but such as decree *Justice*, as the very words of the same verse limit it. 2. Supposing this spoken of *God*; your *Lordship* cannot think that this expression necessarily implies in it a *Divine Commission*, in the Sense now debated; given to all *Kings*; because you have observed your
self,

self, *Sermon*, p. 5. that, by such expressions in *Scripture*, as, *God putteth down one, and setteth up another; He giveth the Kingdom to whom He pleaseth; He gave the land of Judea into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar; &c.* nothing more is often meant, than that He permitted these things to come to pass: And because every one, who reads the *Scripture*, knows that what comes to pass under his inspection, is often there spoken of, as *His doing*; even when it cannot be so much as, in the least degree, approved of, by Him. 3. If your *Lordship* will not interpret this expression of God's nominating the very Persons; why must it be meant of his *immediate Commission* to lawful *Possessors*? The *Phrase* is as strong for the *first*. It excludes no *Possessors*. Neither will it any more follow from this expression, which alone we are now considering, that God interposeth in giving a *Commission* to any *King* in our days; than that He immediately interposeth in nominating him for *King*.

Your *Lordship's Third Argument* was founded upon this, that there was not a number of Men *before* the *Institution of Civil Government*; which number of Men had the Power of the *Magistrate*, &c. My first *Reply* to this, was, not *carping* at an expression, which I have ever avoided: but, an *Argument* drawn from what your *Lordship* had maintained before; which seem'd to me inconsistent with the allowance you made here, *Sermon*, p. 11. where you say, *This indeed might possibly have been true, in case this multitude had sprung out of the Earth; or been created all at once, &c.* Now, if any one desires to be satisfied what your *Lordship* here meant, that *This* should refer to; these two observations are enough, 1. That the words immediately preceding this allowance, are these; *Which whole multitude had then, by Natural Right, the same Power over single Men, which is now exercised by the Magistrate.* Then follows, *This indeed might possibly*

possibly be true, &c. which no one, I believe, could help interpreting of this, *that this multitude might have a Magistratical Authority in them.* 2. That had your *Lordship* had an Eye only to this, *viz.* That there was a *Number* of Men before the institution of *Civil Government*; you could not have chosen this expression. For, supposing that *Multitude* created all at once; it not only *might possibly*, but *must certainly, be true*, that there was a *Number* of Men before the *Institution* of *Civil Government*: From whence it is plain, that your *Lordship's* concession had an Eye to the other Point immediately preceding it. So that my *Argument* drawn from this *Concession*, naturally offered it self; and still stands good: It being impossible to suppose but that your *Lordship* would at first have said so; had you design'd it for a *Concession*, merely for disputation sake, and not for a *real allowance*.

My *Second Reply* was taken from your *Lordship's* distinguishing between the *Natural*, and *Political*, Capacity of Mankind. The force of the reply is not denied by your *Lordship*, any otherwise, than by saying that I mistook your Sense; and by maintaining that, tho' there be ground for the distinction, as the World goes now, yet, at first the *Paternal Government*, at the least of *Adam* and *Noah*, implied in it a *Civil Government* over all their *Descendents*. That your *Lordship* may be of this Mind, I do not deny: But that you speak in your *first Accession-Sermon* of a *Natural Right* to *Civil Government*, in so extensive a manner, as to oblige your *Readers* to think otherwise, is, I think, very plain from what I have before said. And that, in this very *passage* of the *last Sermon*, about which we now are speaking, you could not be understood by any, to make the *Natural*, and *Political*, Capacity, even of *Adam's Children*, the same; is evident from hence, that you are speaking of *every Man*
since

since the first, i. e. of his Children, as well as those of this Generation; and do affirm of them, that, in their Natural Capacity, they were born Subject to their Parents, and in their Political Capacity, to the King. The using the word *and*, here, and not *or*; joyned with your Lordship's unlimited declaration against *Natural Right to Civil Government*; will justify me in fixing this upon you. But, to be sure, now your Lordship hath so plainly declared your self, in this Answer, for Adam, and Noah's Civil Authority; and, in your Sermon, for the Paternal Title of the First Kings to Civil Government; which must take in more than Adam, and Noah: I shall not any more charge you with such a distinction, in so unlimited a manner. And your Lordship having enter'd, as I think, into a new Scheme; and a Scheme, I believe, unknown in former Ages; I shall not now trouble you with my endeavours to confute it: But beg leave here to promise, since your Lordship hath given credit, at least to some branch, or branches, of the Patriarchal Scheme, that a Distinct Examination of every Branch of that Scheme, (as it hath been mended, and laboured, by the latest, and ablest Hand, that ever yet managed it,) which hath lain by me for some time, shall be Published in a Second Part of the Measures of Submission, which will soon follow these Papers; in which the Original of Civil Authority shall be largely discussed. At present, since your Lordship here saith that, if Moses's History of the Creation be true, the Magistrate's Power is such, as the People never could have, p. 32. and that you verily believe the first Man had as much the Power, (i. e. in this Question, the Authority) of a Civil Governor, as any King hath now, p. 33. I only beg leave to ask, How this appears? And I find, that your Lordship, p. 33. acknowledges that it is not so easy to prove this, in the Antediluvian State; because of the shortness of the History. But, with respect to the
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Times after the Flood, your *Lordship* thinks it evident, that that *Command*, Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed, either instituted a *Civil Government*; or supposed it already settled: For who, but the *Civil Magistrate*, could *Judicially* put to Death a *Murderer*? And who could be then that *Civil Governour*, but *Noah*? But, with Submission, My Lord, If this *Command* Instituted *Civil Government*; as you allow us to think, it might: then, *Noah* was not *Civil Governour* before this, either in the *Ark*, or after the Flood; then, his being a *Magistrate*, did not depend upon his being the *Common Father*, but upon *God's* positive declaration; and then, it is easie to answer your *Lordship's* last *Question*, by saying that any one might have been that *Civil Governour*, as well as *Noah*, by the appointment of *God*; who hath the absolute disposal of this *Right to Government*. But if your *Lordship* will relinquish this; and say, that this *Command* supposeth a *Civil Government* already fixed in *Noah*; I beg of you to consider, whether this be not supposing the very thing in debate: Because there is nothing in these words that necessarily infers a *Judicial procedure* against a *Murderer*, after the Custom of such *Courts* of Judicature, as long experience seems to have brought into use: and nothing but what may be interpreted, as an allowance to all Men to attaque, and use a *Murderer* as a public *Enemy*. And if this may be the meaning of them; then it must be proved, that there were *Judicial Proceedings* against *Malefactors*, at that time, in use, from other passages; and not from this: which doth by no means necessarily imply any such thing. And I cannot but think, if *Almighty God* had respect, in this *passage*, to *Noah*, as a *Civil Magistrate* already settled; that it would have been expressed so, as to have named *Him*, as the only *Avenger of Blood*; and so, likewise, if *Modern Accounts* of *Magistracy* be true,

as to have exempted *Him* from all *Censure*, and *Punishment*, from the rest of Mankind. Neither of which is done in these words. *Whoso sheddeth Man's Blood*, is as unlimited an expression, as possible; and as little in favour of *Noah*, as of any of his Sons: Spoken to all in common, *Gen. 9. 6.* And in the threatening, *by man shall his Blood be shed*, the word *Man* may signify any Man, of what degree soever, as well as the word *Man* in the former part of the Sentence, *whoso sheddeth man's blood.* Which is enough to shew, that what your *Lordship* hath alleged in favour even of *Adam*, and *Noah*, is not sufficient to prove that their *Paternal Government* implied in it a *Civil Government* over their *Descendants*: much less, to prove that this was of any importance to the *Civil Government* of any Nation in the World, even the next minute after their Deaths.

I have but one thing now to add; which, I confess, I cannot persuade my self to omit; it seems to be of so great importance to this Nation, in its present Circumstances: *viz.* that, if *Paternal Right* were, by *God's* appointment, the foundation of *Civil Authority*; then, either *God's* appointment is of little obligation; or it is impossible that any *Prescription*, or any *Humane Constitution*, can give to a *Woman*, a *Right to Civil Government*. For tho', after the innumerable Changes that have been made in the Governments of all Nations, it cannot appear which *Man* hath the antient *Natural Right* to the *Civil Government* of a Nation; yet, this must appear, that it is impossible, a *Woman* should have it. *Non appa-
rere* may be, in effect, the same with *non esse*, in some Cases. But what shall we say to the Case of a *Queen*: of whom, upon the foregoing Principles, I suspect, it may be affirmed, not only that her *Original Right to Government* doth not appear; but that it appears plainly, *She* can have none? I fear,
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this will reduce the *Title* of any *Queen*, to nothing better than *Usurpation*: And this consideration hath made me, on other occasions, appear against such a *Scheme*; and think it worth while to examine it.

3. My *Third Reply* was taken from hence, That your *Lordship* had not urged any thing to prove that every Man, since the first, was born a Subject in a *Political* sense: which was the Point to be proved. This was the *medium*, which your *Lordship* voluntarily chose; in order to prove the Falseness of a certain *Position* mentioned before. And therefore, I hope it could be no Crime in me to call for some *proof* of this; upon which the *Argument* rested: especially, since it was not a point imposed by me; but an *affirmative* of your *Lordship's*. And on the side of an *affirmative*; you contend that demonstration may most justly be expected. Whether your *Lordship* hath, under the preceding Head, advanced sufficient proof of this, the *Reader* will judge, by comparing it with what I have just now replied.

4. My *Fourth Reply* was taken from your *Lordship's* Concession, that there is no such thing as *Natural Right* to *Civil Government*: Which I thought the best way of arguing I could have chosen. Your *Lordship* denies that you meant the *Concession*, as I understood it; and hath now revoked it, if ever it were meant so. Whether I had reason to understand it as I did, hath appeared from what I have already said to this, under the *Second general Head*: But the main *Cause* depends not upon my having *mistaken*, or *not mistaken*, this matter.

5. My *Fifth Reply* was only design'd to shew the possibility of laying the foundation of *Civil Government* in *Voluntary Compact*, and *Consent*, by instantiating in some *Companies*, or *Clans*, of Men, without
any

any *established Civil Government* amongst them: Which *Establishment*, therefore, cannot, I say, be founded *rightfully* upon any thing, but their *Consent*. In answer to this, your *Lordship* is pleased to name another way of *rightfully settling* it, and that is, the *immediate interposition of Almighty God*, p. 41. But, I believe, no one could possibly understand me otherwise, than as speaking of the ordinary course of things, under the guidance of the ordinary *Providence of God*. If I should say, that the only *rightful* way of recovering the possession of an *Estate*, is to make appear the best *legal Right* to it; would any one deny this, because there is another way, *viz.* by the miraculous interposition of *God Almighty* in a man's behalf? Your *Lordship* saith, there is no other *rightful Title* to *Government*, but a *legal* one. Would it become me, in answer to this, to *hope* that your *Lordship* will allow, that, if *God Almighty* should immediately appoint a Person to Govern, this would be a *rightful Title*?

But your *Lordship* not only allegeth this, but offers several other difficulties upon this Head of *Consent*; all which will, I think, be answered by putting the *Case* in very few words, as it ought to be: And all which, shall, in due time, be considered more at length; as I have already promised. Let us at present, therefore, only suppose several Families of *Men, Women, and Children*, flying from *Tyranny, and Misery*, to have been cast by the *Providence of God*, upon an unpossess'd part of a *Continent*; the other parts of which we will suppose full of *Inhabitants*. These Persons may find *Enemies*, even amongst themselves, to their *Common Quiet*; as well as many *Acts of Violence, and Rapine*, threatned from the *Inhabitants* of the other *Parts*. Here, in the first place, it is plain, that all who can do it, have *Authority* to defend themselves,

selves, and their *Brethren*, against these *Enemies* of both sorts; and are obliged, in reason, to do it, as opportunity offers; and might frequently have *Assemblies* for this purpose, to which as many, as pleased, might come. But let us suppose, that, thinking it more convenient to entrust this matter of *Self-defense*, and their *Common Interest*, with some particular Persons, whose business, in a peculiar manner, it should be, to advise amongst themselves, and to issue out Orders, and Commands, for the public good; any part of those present in one of these *Assemblies*, should resolve upon a particular *Person*, or *Persons*, to invest with this Office: here it is plain, that nothing is necessary for the settling of *Civil Government* amongst them, but this *Consent*, by which they give an *Authority*, which they had before in themselves. And it is the dictate of *Reason*, which is the Voice of *God*, that they should do thus. A *Civil Society*, with settled *Governours*, would by this means be formed: Which *Governours* would have a *Right* to defend this *Society*, against all *Enemies*, whether *Men*, or *Women*; *Parents*, or *Children*; whether such as were of the same *Body* before, or such as were older *Inhabitants* of other parts of the same Land. If others of them, who *dissent* from this, thinking other Methods better, depart, and settle another *Society*, under a different form of *Civil Government*; here will be another *Government* settled by *Consent*: And this will have the same right likewise to defend it self from all sorts of *Enemies*. If the *Wives* of any, dislike these proceedings; yet, the *Matrimonial Contract* is an obligation upon them not to be *Enemies* to that *Society*, in which their *Husbands* have fixed themselves: but if they be so, the *Society* is to be defended from *them*, as from other *Enemies*. If any of their *Children*, upon coming to the use of
their

their own Reason, dissent; this doth not prove that the Government was not rightfully settled amongst them who did consent to it. These Children, must either remove; or, if they live within the reach of it, must submit, at least, to what they cannot approve of: Otherwise, the Society hath a Right to be defended against them, as Public Enemies. Hence it is plain, that, tho' the Consent of some doth not necessarily conclude those who dissent; yet, it settles a Civil Government amongst those who consent; and gives the Civil Governour such an Authority over those who dissent from it, as that He may Rightfully make Laws, and execute them, against all Persons, of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions, who endanger the safety of this Community: Which I hope, is a sufficient answer to what your Lordship urgeth, p. 39. But I may well be excused from naming the precise time, when Consent form'd the very first Civil Government, and the Person to whom the Invention was owing, as your Lordship seems to expect, p. 35. Since you are pleased your self to own, with respect to your own Scheme, that the most antient, and sacred, History is so short, as to give not the least account of any Act of the Regal Government of Adam, or his Heirs, for that long space of time before the Flood; and, since I can go so far as, out of that short History, to give an instance which makes it very probable that there was a space of time at first, without an Established Civil Government; viz. That of Cain: who, upon occasion of his murdering Abel, did not express a fear of being taken, and judicially tried, and condemned, by Adam; but of being killed by any of mankind, who should meet him; which is not the fear of a Murderer, under any settled Civil Government. Yet, if your Lordship will trust the best Historians, and the wisest Heads

amongst the *Heathens*; they will tell you the very Men, to whom some particular *Neighbourhoods*, by consent, subjected themselves, which before had no settled form of *Civil Government*: As shall be more fully discoursed, on another occasion.

My *sixth Reply* was this; that, supposing your *Lordship* should be able to prove the *Authority* of *Governours* to come from *God*, in the highest sense possible; I could not see the great advantage of this to the *Cause* you defend; that is, as I there explain it, the *Governed* may, notwithstanding this, have a right to save themselves from being ruined, even by their *Governours*; and may have as immediate a *Commission* from *God* for *Self-preservation*, and *Self-defense*. That the contrary to this, is what your *Lordship* maintained, under the covert of other words, is what I have plainly proved; that this *Point*, of the *Divine Authority* of *Governours*, was laboured by your *Lordship* in order to strengthen what you had before said of the *Exemption* of *Governours*; and to introduce, amongst the rest, the inference about *Unlimited Non-resistance*; will be plain to any one, who will be at the pains to look into the *Sermon*. The *Cause*, therefore, which your *Lordship* defends, was not mistaken by me: At least, that the most *unlimited Non-resistance* of *Subjects*, is one of the *Causes* defended by you, your *Lordship* doth not deny. And therefore, this *Reply* stands good, having nothing alleged against it, but that I have misrepresented your *Sense*, as to the *Extent* of the *Authority* of the *Magistrate*: of which I have given a full account already.

To what follows, p. 47. I have sufficiently answered already. Your *Lordship* confined all your *Argument*, as you sometimes your self contend, to the
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Emperour, or Supreme Magistrate. You do here acknowledge, that *Deputed Magistrates* were likewise spoken of by *St. Paul*. From whence I have argued, that nothing can be inferred, merely from *St. Paul's Words*, with respect to the *Supreme*; which may not likewise be inferred, concerning the *Subordinate*.

The only thing remaining, that comes under this *Third General Head* of my present *Design*, is, your *Lordship's Reply* to the *Question* I asked, *Considerations*, p. 329. *In what are Magistrates the Ministers of God*, considered as exceeding the *Bounds of their Commission*? To which your *Lordship* replies, p. 49. that I should first have answered a few *Questions*, which the latter part of the same Sentence that gave occasion to my *Question*, did, by implication, put to any Person that should be in the mind to take *Exceptions*, &c. From whence I beg leave to argue, in my own behalf, that if it would have been no *Crime* in me, here, to have charged your *Lordship* with asking *Questions*, by implication; it cannot be a *Crime* in me, in other places, to have charged you with *Positions*, tho' only by implication, and not in exprefs words, affirmed. But, as to the *Questions* here proposed; To the first I have answered at full length, in the 2. *Chap.* of the *Measures of Submission*; as likewise to the *Third*: having there laid down, and vindicated, my interpretation of *Rom. 13. 1, 2, &c.* From whence any Reader may see, that, as I cannot make *Tyranny* the *Ministry of God*; so, I never thought of confining *St. Paul's Precepts* to any particular time; but have pleaded for the extent of them, rightly understood, to all *Ages of the Gospel*. And for the *Second*, about the *Laws of the Empire*; I think it evident from *St. Paul* himself, that, as

yet, *Christians*, equally with all other Men, were protected by them, in their *Privileges*, and *Properties*. And, upon the contrary supposition, I have given a *Reply* to this *Difficulty*, in the *Measures of Submission*, p. 141. I shall not therefore, now trouble your *Lordship* unnecessarily upon these *Heads*: because I find nothing alleged here against what I formerly advanced; and because I have a new occasion given me, by a very *Ingenious* and *Celebrated Author*, particularly to consider these *Difficulties*. To return therefore,

The *Question* proposed by me, was this, In what is it, that the *Magistrate*, whilst He is transgressing his *Commission*, is the *Minister of God*; or hath the *Authority of God*? Your *Lordship* answers, p. 50. that tho', as *bad Magistrates*, they transgress *God's Rules*; yet, as *Magistrates*, or *Governours*, they are still the *Ministers of God*. The meaning of which, as it is an Answer to this *Question*, must be this; that, as *bad Magistrates*, they are without all *Commission* from *God*; but as *Magistrates*, as *Officers* truly deserving that name, they have his *Commission*: That is, in other words, that, in whatsoever they do against the *Ends* of their *Office*, they are without *Authority*; but, in whatsoever they do agreeably to the *Office* of *Magistrates*, they are his *Ministers*. Which is the very thing for which I am contending. The *Simile*, by which your *Lordship* endeavours to explain it, is this. *Just as a Priest is the Ecclesiastical Minister of God, and actually the Minister of Jesus Christ, even at the very time that He exceeds the bounds of his Commission, and is preaching contrary to the Gospel.* To which I humbly reply, that this Man, in the doing this, whoever He be, is the *Minister*, not of *Jesus Christ*, but of the great Enemy of Mankind. His being the *Minister of Jesus Christ*, in the
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Preaching his Will; or Baptizing Believers; or Propagating his Faith; cannot make him the Minister of Christ, even whilst He is Preaching against Christ; dishonouring his Gospel; and arguing Men into Infidelity. And therefore, I cannot but wish, your Lordship had worded this after another manner. For, if your Lordship only means, that even whilst He is Preaching against Christ, He hath Authority to Preach for him; that whilst He is shewing himself the Minister of an Evil Spirit, He is, by his Office, oblig'd to be the Minister of Christ; this may be true: but is nothing against what I have alleged. For, in this Case, I likewise think these two things very evident. 1. That the People are strictly obliged not to obey Him in any thing, which they know to be contrary to Christ's Law; even tho' he Preach it under the pretext of his having Authority to Preach the contrary. And, 2. That, supposing the continuance of his Priestly Authority, in any Points, becomes inconsistent with the interest, and preservation, of Christ's Church, He is from that instant divested of all Authority: I say, supposing it certain, that He cannot retain his Authority which was once given Him, without the ruine of the Church. This Case, cannot, as I know of, happen. But I put it thus, to make it parallel with the Case of Civil Authority: of which I said these two things, 1. That a Prince cannot have God's Authority, in any one single instance, to act against the end of his Office: Tho' whilst He is doing it, it may be true, that He hath Commission, and Authority, to do the contrary. 2. That, when his having Power becomes inconsistent with the preservation of the Community, and good of the People; it cannot be God's Will that he should be kept in Possession of Power: or, that his Commission to do the Office of

a *Magistrate* to a *Nation*, should continue, when He cannot do that, without ruining it, by some other parts of his *Conduct*. But, as I have observ'd already, so I must observe again, that I never said, or thought, that a *Man's Right* to *Govern*, or *Authority* to exercise the *Office* of a *Magistrate*, was wholly vacated by any single instance of mismanagement; or any thing like it: as your *Lordship* represents me, p. 49. But this I now say, with Relation to the instance of a *Mayor* of a *Corporation*, there again urged by your *Lordship*; that, should this *Mayor*, under the pretext of his *Commission*, break into the Houses of the *Free-men*, and attack their Lives, I cannot but think that the *Law* of the *Land*, as well as of *Reason*, would justify them, in using Him as a *Common Robber*; and, if the consequence of that should be, that his *Commission* should be at an *End*, with his *Life*, would even then acquit them of the guilt of *Murder*. But the only way, in which I apply all this to the *Supreme Civil Magistrate* is this, that his *Commission* gives him a *Right* to *Rule* no longer, than his *having Power* is consistent with the preservation, and safety, of the whole *Community*: But ceases to give *Right*, when his *Government* is to the *ruine* of the whole.

To what your *Lordship* cites out of a *Modern Author*, p. 51. I only answer, That the *Whole Duty of Man*, is, and ever will be, an *excellent Book*: but that I know of no way more likely to lessen its credit in the *World*, than to quote it, as if it were the work of an inspired, infallible Judgment; free from all Error, in every particular. The Example of *David*, there alleged, I have long ago shewn to be the Example of a *Subject*, defending himself by *Arms* against his *Sovereign*,

veraign; the *Lord's Anointed*, in a proper sense of these words: But no notice is taken of this. The *Texts of Scripture* there cited have been already largely discussed: Nor is there any proof offered there, that these *Texts* do lay whole *Nations* of *Subjects*, at once, under the necessity of submitting to *Ruine*.

I have thus, my *Lord*, presumed once again to consider every one of those points, urged in the *Considerations*; about which there still seemed to remain any dispute between us: And, I humbly hope, have set them in a just light.

And now it is fit for me to take some notice of what your *Lordship* hath added, in this *Answer*, against my *Doctrine*, to what was before advanced in your *Sermons*. For, tho' your *Lordship* hath often professed, that you would not touch upon the matter of *Self-defense*; or the late *Revolution*: yet. it cannot be dissembled, that your *Lordship* hath, in reality, touched upon *them*; and upon *me*, for defending them; after a very remarkable, and very severe manner.

I. It is more than once insinuated, that the *Doctrine* maintained by me, cannot be reconciled with *St. Paul*; or with my subscribing to the *Homilies*; or, as your *Lordship* seems to intend in some of the last pages of your *Answer*, with the general *Declarations of Scripture* concerning the *Submission* of *Children*, and of *Slaves*; or, with the *Liturgy* of our *Church*, to which I have given *Assent*, and *Consent*. To the three first, I shall say nothing, at this time, because I have largely considered them, in the *Measures of Submission*; to which I may justly refer the *Reader*; your *Lordship* having not attempted to in-

validate those Arguments, by which, I think, I have fully, proved the contrary: And because an ingenious *Author*, by urging these *objections* again, in a very particular manner, hath laid a necessity upon me of considering them, once more, in another place. As to the last, the contradicting the *Liturgy*; the particulars mentioned by your *Lordship* are these, viz. *whose Minister She is* — *Whose Authority She hath* — and, *The only Ruler of Princes* — which you call *stubborn Expressions*, &c. p. 40. and give unkind intimations, as if I could not heartily assent to them. To this therefore, I answer, 1. That there is no Person living, who can more heartily say, that *Her Majesty* is the *Minister of God*: because there is no one, to whose whole *Scheme of Principles* it is more agreeable sincerely to believe, that this may be justly affirmed of so excellent a *Princess*, who recommends *Virtue* by her *Example*; puts in execution wholesome *Laws* against *Vice*; supports the *Cause of Liberty*, and the *Protestant Religion*, with zeal and perseverance; and answers so truly to *St. Paul's Character*, the *Minister of God to us for good*. And how the contrary can be intimated of me, who have been all along contending that this *Character*, in *St. Paul*, belongs to *Magistrates* answering the *Ends of their Office*, and carrying on an useful work in the *World*; without insinuating at the same time something which, I dare say, is wholly contrary to your *Lordship's* thoughts, I leave to others.

2. *Whose Authority she hath*, is an expression so far from being a seeming contradiction to my *Principles*; that it is peculiarly agreeable to them, I am sorry, your *Lordship* hath given me this occasion. But *Self-defense* makes it justifiable for me to say, that, tho' I make not the least doubt
of

of your *Lordship's* sincere Love, and hearty Zeal, for her *Majesty*, and her *Government*: yet, you cannot be led by your Principles, so heartily to affirm that her *Majesty* hath *God's Authority*, as I am ready to affirm it, every day of my Life. For, maintaining the Lawfulness and Honourableness of the first steps of the *Revolution*, and heartily believing that the *Nations* chusing *Representatives*, and these *Representatives*, together with the *Lords*, voluntarily consenting to make *K. William*, and *Q. Mary*, their *Civil Governours*, was approved by *God*; that, upon that *Consent*, it was the Will of *God Almighty* that *They* should have right to Rule; and that all the *Acts*, for the security of the *Nation*, passed by *Them*, and that *Parliament*, should not only be valid, at present, with respect to the *Subject*, but *Authoritative* in themselves: Holding all this, I say, I can heartily believe, and declare, that her *Majesty* hath *God's Authority*; hath a *Right* to Rule most agreeable to *God's Will*; confirm'd, and established, by his most certain approbation, which cannot be wanting, according to my Principles, in such a Case as this. Whereas, as I have shewn already, your *Lordship*, condemning all the first steps which led to this *Settlement*; and allowing of no *Right* in *Subjects* to depart, in any Case, from the ordinary settled Methods: cannot, as I conceive, so readily give the *Divine Approbation* to the *Settlement* it self; or, to the *Government* of any, whose *Title*, and *Possession*, are founded originally, in that *Resistance*, which you condemn as down-right *Rebellion*. I hope, your *Lordship* hath not so mistaken me, as to think that I have pleaded absolutely against giving a *Divine Authority* to *Princes*. For I have only pleaded against it, (as the *Judicious Hooker*, in effect, did long ago,) in a sense inconsistent with *Humane Consent* and *Compact*:

past. And I assure your Lordship that my Principles are such, as unavoidably lead me to declare, and maintain, such a Governour as our Queen, brought to the Throne by so Honourable Methods, and exercising her Power after so excellent, and beneficial, a manner, to be cloathed with God's Authority; to have her Right confirmed by his Will; to be his Minister, his Vice-gerent, his Representative in this lower World. But all this indeed, without offering Her the Vassalage of Slaves, instead of the Obedience of Subjects.

3. I do likewise say, from my Heart, that God is the only Ruler of Princes: And am ready to shew, that I no more contradict this, by allowing the whole Community a Right to defend themselves, against a Prince, certainly attempting their Ruine; than your Lordship doth, by allowing to her Majesty, a Right to defend her self, and her People, against the French King. For God is the only Ruler of the French King; as well as of other Princes. If, therefore, no one hath a Right to Censure, and Punish, another, who is not Superior to, and Ruler of, this other; then, hath not her Majesty a Right to Censure, and Punish, the French King. But your Lordship will allow, and contend, that She hath this Right; as far as is implied in the Defense of the World about Him: tho' God is his only Ruler. From whence it follows, that the whole Gallic Community may have the same Right against Him; notwithstanding any thing in this expression. The one being Subjects, the other a Prince, makes no difference, as to this Argument: Because one Prince is no more the Ruler of another Prince, than a whole Nation is the Ruler of their own Prince. And consequently, if your Lordship can read this, in the Common Prayer-Book, whilst you allow the French King to be Accountable

countable to her Majesty, and her Allies; and grant them a Right to Censure, and Punish, Him, as far as their Common Cause requires; I may reasonably hope, that your Lordship will not again insinuate that I cannot as heartily assent to the same passage, merely because I plead for such a Right to Self-defense in a whole Nation, as must sometimes imply in it Censure and Punishment: Since this Principle of mine, is no more inconsistent with the declaring God to be the only Ruler of Princes; than your own allowing Princes, and States, to Censure, and Punish, other Princes, whose only Ruler, God is. This is fully sufficient for my own justification, without examining more nicely into the true meaning of the Phrase.

2. But this is not the only manner, in which your Lordship hath, in this last Answer, touched upon the Revolution, and Self-defense, &c. The Account given of the true Notion of a Public Benefactor, p. 26. compared with the effectual declaring Resistance to be an unlawful, and unwarrantable, Method of saving Subjects from Ruine; the making Resistance, even in Cases of Extreme Exigency, the same with Rebellion; and the dictate of Corrupt Humane Nature, which is not ready to submit to the Restraints that are laid upon it by God and Religion, p. 55; the interpreting Acts of Parliament so, as to contradict my Doctrine, and so, as to make the Executive Power alone, and acting without, and even against, the Legislative, in all possible Cases, irresistible, p. 28; the almost constant joining Resistance, and Rebellion, together, that so they may appear, in all Cases, the same; the taking occasion from my calling the Revolution a Rebellion, by way of Irony, and with regard to some Principles, in effect, to call it so very seriously, p. 48; the joining me with those

those who suffered for the Murther of K. Charles I. p. 52. only for justifying the *Self-defense* practised by a whole Community, and the Conduct of all those, from the *Highest* to the *Lowest*, who saved this Nation, by joining themselves to the Arms of the P. of Orange; the making such representations of me, and my *Doctrine*, in many places, as that her Majesty, (to whom an appeal is made by your Lordship) must needs judge that I am sowing *Sedition*, fomenting *Disturbances*, and raising *Rebellion* amongst her Subjects, whilst I am doing Her true and faithful Service. These, and the like, too many to dwell upon, carry nothing indeed of *Argument* along with them: But they effectually, and very severely, touch upon the *Late Revolution*, and *National Self-defense*; as well as upon me, whose only Crime it is, to have defended them. And, as they sufficiently shew your Lordship's present disposition: so, they contain in them such *Accusations* against me, as make it necessary, before I conclude,

IV. To add something, by way of *Apology* for myself; and the part which I have acted in this Cause.

My Lord,

I am very sensible that it can by no means become me, to follow your Lordship in an *Appeal* to her *Excellent Majesty*; or so much as to hope that any thing written by so unworthy a Person, can ever be thought worthy of the least regard from Her. But if, moved by your Lordship's Representations, She should condescend so far, as to enquire, *What my Crime is*; I am not so great an Enemy to my self, as not to wish that She may receive another, and very different, Account of the mat-

ter. viz. 1. That my *Crime*, with respect to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, is this; the endeavouring to prove that the general Precepts of it, concerning the Duty of Subjects, ought not to be so interpreted. as to lay whole Nations under the necessity of submitting to Universal Slavery, and Ruine: And this not attempted by me, till a Case had actually happen'd in our own Nation, which made it the subject of every Honest Christian's enquiry; and not till the contrary decisions of Multitudes of Writers had made the Consciences of many uneasy in this Point; and dissatisfied with the Happy Establishment founded upon a Practice agreeable to this Doctrine. 2. That my *Crime*, with respect to her Majesty, and her Government, is this; The endeavouring to justify her Conduct in that Glorious part which She bare in the late Revolution; to vindicate, not only her People's behaviour, in the submitting to Her, but her own Honour, and Justice, in Possessing a Government founded upon it: to reconcile the Affections of her Subjects to the Basis upon which it stands, that so they may not only submit, but approve; not only approve, but love; not only love, but zealously defend it against all opposers: to demonstrate, that it is not settled upon Usurpation, or Sin; but upon a lawful Practice; and on that Consent, which is the surest band of a Manly Obedience in Subjects; the firmest Title of Sovereignty to Princes; and ever secure of the support of God's Authority, when it exerts it self after so unblameable, and beneficial, a manner. If the Case were thus truly represented; I should not fear that a Defender of these Principles, could be esteemed, by her Majesty, an Enemy to her Government: Especially if it were added, that, whilst I have been asserting this Right in a whole Nation, I have ever taken the same opportunity of earnestly recommending

ing Her excellent *Conduct* to the affections of her *People*: That, whilst I have been doing the *former*, in order to secure the *foundation*, I have not failed to do the *latter*, for the security of *her self*; that so Her *Administration* might appear as lovely to her *Subjects*, as her *Title* is *Glorious*, and unreplicable: That I have ever set my self to oppose those *Jealousies*, and *Surmises*, by which *others* were shaking the quiet and safety of her *Government*; and particularly, at the time when the *Pretender* was threatening an *Invasion*, and when some, of other *Principles*, were openly attacking the *Administration*, and endeavouring to overthrow her *Right*; I thought it a most seasonable *Duty* to *Affert*, and *Vindicate* it, to as high a degree, and in as public a manner, as possible; tho' I was afterwards publicly abused for it, by the great *Advocate* for the *Pretender's Cause*; as I am, for the whole, now represented as an *Enemy* to *Government*; of *Levelling Principles*; and I know not what. But if, after all I can say, this must be my *Lot*; may God forgive those who make it so! May the unhappiness be only mine, to suffer under the Reputation of being an *Enemy* to a *Queen*, whose *Conduct*, whose *Title*, whose *Administration*, it hath been my peculiar, and long-continued *Labour* to recommend to the *delight*, the *approbation*, the *zeal* of her *People*: and may it be the unenvied good fortune of *others*, to be able to demonstrate their Love to *Her Majesty*, by disapproving her *Practice*; to shew their *zeal* for her *Government*, by condemning the *foundation* upon which it stands; and to recommend it, if possible, to the *affections* of her *People*, by proving it to be the consequence of a *successful Rebellion*!

Not that I would have it insinuated, my *Lord*, that those, who are not of the *same Principles*,
may

may not come in to a *Government*, now settled, the *first Settlement* of which they could not approve of; or may not be good *Subjects* to it, as long as it can maintain it self; or may not, by some *Considerations*, be induced even to *Wish* the continuance of it. But I would appeal to your *Lordship*; or to the professed *Enemies* of the *Government*, who may judge in this *Case* more impartially than either of us; whether they do not find their account in their continual recommending the *Principles* of *Absolute Non-resistance*; whether they do not frequently make the *Consciences* of Men uneasy at the present *Settlement*, merely by making them uneasy at the *Foundation* on which it stands; whether their *Great Advocate* could have done any thing more to his Purpose, than, under pretense of vindicating your *Lordship*, to manage both your *Principles*, and your *Authority*, against our *Establishment*. I would appeal to them, to judge, who are they that are most likely, both by *Principle*, and *Affection*, to defend this *Government* to the last extremity: They, who are guided by their *Consciences* into all the *Measures* by which it is *Established*, and into the love of the first steps that led to it; or they, who are induced, or barely permitted, by their *Consciences*, to submit to it, as long as it can protect them. Or, let all the World judge, who are most likely to be the firmest Friends to that *Establishment*, by which her *Majesty* Reigns; they, whose *Principles* would have engaged them to bear an active part in those steps, by which *She* came to the *Throne*; or they, whose *Principles* must have engaged them to abhor those steps, and to have acted such a *Passive Part*, as must have ended in the ruine of *Her*; the *Constitution*; and the whole *Protestant Nation*. Take a Person, who believes in
his

his Conscience the lawfulness of that *Resistance*, by which the *Nation* hath been saved: And you will find in him a *Zeal*, and *Ardour*, to maintain the *Government*, at any expense, against all *Opposers*. If you find an *Alteration*, or *Coldness*, at any time: you will find likewise an *Alteration* in his *professing* that *Principle*; or that He expects the support of his Interest from Men of the contrary Mind. Take one, who by never so long Study, hath argued himself into *Mere Submission* to a *Government* founded upon this *Resistance*: And you will very frequently see a great *Indifference*; a mixture of *Uneasiness*, and *Discontent*; and a readiness to catch at every little thing to the disadvantage of this *Settlement*. I am far from saying, it is always thus. But that this is generally the Case: and that, whatever *Zeal* there is on one side; whatever *Coldness* on the other; is generally owing to the *Principles*, on each side embraced, with respect to *Resistance* alone, is too plain to be denied. Or, take a Person, if such an one can be found, who hath from *Mere Submission* to the *Government*, been argued into a belief of the lawfulness of that *Resistance* by which it came to be settled: And let him declare, whether, upon this alteration, He hath not found himself more perfectly easy and satisfied, even in his *Submission*; and more heartily fixed in his opposition to that former *Settlement*, from which the *Nation* is departed. Nay, let past *Experience* determine from whence all the impediments to this *Settlement* came; from whence, the Reluctance to fill the Throne at first; from whence, the unwillingness to Swear to it when it was full; from whence, the Difficulties that clog'd all designs for supporting it against the *Common Enemy*; from whence, the delays, and objections, to retard Supplies,

plies, and to embarrass Affairs in the late Reign; from whence, the greatest part of the uneasiness at this War with *France*; from whence, the dislike to the framing and passing the Act of *Settlement*; from whence, the visible *dissatisfaction*, discovered upon every success of the *Common Arms*, and the joy which betrays it felt, upon every little imaginary Advantage of the *Common Enemy*; from whence, in one word, the Zeal of some for the former Settlement; and the Indifference of others for the present. From what Principle have these unhappinesses come, but from this one, That a Nation must not be allowed, without a damnable sin, to go out of the methods of *Submission*, even to save it self from Ruine? From what Persons, but either from those who really believe this *Doctrine*; or have openly professed to do it; or from those whose Interest hath ever been supported by such as zealously espouse it?

Alas! My Lord, I am not the first, who have looked back, beyond mere *Submission*, to the Foundation upon which the *Queen*, and her People, jointly stand. They look back to it, who are ever endeavouring to Arm Mens Minds against the present *Establishment*, by condemning the *Methods* that led to it. They look back to it, who, without any such design, effectually do the same thing. The Interest of the Nation, therefore, requires, and obliges, others to look back to it, after another manner. For, who cannot see that it is the interest of the Nation, that all should be perfectly satisfied in the Foundation of an *Establishment*; which even its *Enemies* would acknow-

ledge Happy, could they approve of the *Beginnings* that introduced it? If these *Enemies* look back to it with an *Evil Eye*, why may not others be allowed to cast a *Favourable Eye* upon it? Nay, Why should not something be done towards the satisfaction of the *Consciences* of these *professed Adversaries*: who would come in, as *Friends*, did they not stick at this one Point, which I have endeavour'd to vindicate? This, methinks, may justify me, in what I have done, as I am a *Member* of this *Community*; whose *Happiness*, in all probability, lives, and dies, with the present *Establishment*.

Nor is it less necessary, or less justifiable, for *Us*, who are the *Ministers* of the *Gospel*, to look farther than to *Mere Submission* to this *Settlement*: because the *Case* of the *Revolution* is a *Public, National, Case of Conscience*; and the lawfulness, or unlawfulness, of the like *Practice*, is a *Case*, in which both *Clergy*, and *Lairy*, of this *Land*, have, long before my time, thought their *Consciences* extremely concerned. Were it only on this last account; it could not be inexcusable in any *Clergyman* to debate this matter in a *Theological* manner. But on the *former*, it hath, I think, become absolutely necessary that, one way or other, it should be put as much out of doubt as possible. For the matter is now reduc'd to this: Whether we lie under a *National Guilt*; or not. If the *Nation* find against *God*, in inviting over the *Arms* of *Resistance*; or in joining themselves to them when they were come; or in casting off their *Allegiance* to one *King*, and fixing it to another, by illegal methods; this is

a *National Guilt*. And tho' this may bring along with it Temporal good Consequences; it is nevertheless, a *Guilt*. Nor do I see, my Lord, but that *They*, who only accept of this deliverance; and submit themselves to the Government settled by it; must still partake of this *Guilt*, even tho' they did not approve of it: unless they be ready, upon a good opportunity, to return to the former Course. Because this, according to their *Principles*, is not like the accepting a deliverance from one *Robber*, by the means of another; but it is like a *Child's* accepting of a deliverance at the hands of one who hath no right to interpose; and likewise escaping, and withdrawing obedience, from an unreasonable Father, who still Claims, and Challenges, this Obedience. So did the *Nation*, according to some Men, accept of a deliverance, brought about by unlawful means, from the Power of a *Prince*, who, they hold, could not forfeit his Title to their *Allegiance*; who, I am sure, always kept up his Claim to it; and who was, to them, their *legal King*; without whose *Az*, no Alteration in the *Constitution* could be made. Now what follows from hence? Must there not be a *National Repentance*? And can there be a *National Repentance*, in case of a *National Injustice*, without *Restitution*? Without the *Restitution* of their *Allegiance*, according to that *Settlement* from which they are departed? This, my Lord, is what I fear; that, if this must still go for a *National Guilt*, and the *Nation* should be persuaded into the *Principles* that lead to this, nothing can be the *End*, but to return to the *old Course*; and to trust *Almighty God* for the Consequences, as some express it: that is, in truth, to tempt *Almighty*

God, who hath no where promised, without their own Concurrence, to save them from Ruine; or; in other words, from a *Popish Establishment* both in Church and State. And if this be so; one would think it might at least be pardonable in me, to endeavour to shew that the Nation is not under the guilt of any such *Injustice*, and therefore, not under the obligation to make any such *Restitution*; that they had a *Right* to save themselves from ruine, and to consult their future security; that the *Laws of God* forbid it not; and that their guilt would now lie in returning, even in their Hearts, to *Egypt*. If this be a matter then, of infinite moment; relating both to the Temporal, and Eternal, Interest of the People of this Land: how can it be a Task improper for a *Divine*, to endeavour to set it in as clear a light as possible?

Besides, Whether We will or no, the Minds of Men are so framed, that they *must*, they *will*, look back to the *Foundations* upon which their *present State* is fixed: especially, when the matter is within the reach of their own memory; and they themselves perhaps were personally engaged in it. If a sudden Passion, or a strong Sense of *Temporal Interest*, pushed them into *unlawful Methods*; the only way of regaining God's Favour is, to *undo* what they then *acted*, whilst the way lies open: before length of time obscures, and effaces, those *antient Paths*, to which they ought in *Duty* to return. But, if it can be shewn that their *judgments* were well informed; and that what they *acted*, was both lawful, and honourable; it cannot be beneath our care thus to consult

sult the inward Peace of so many Consciences; and thus to engage these Persons to continue their faithful Services to the *Establishment*, which they help'd to found: who, by the *Doubts*, and *Terrors*, infused into them by others, might have their Consciences armed against the the work of their own hands. In one word; supposing the *Principles*, to which the present *Establishment* owes its being, universally embraced; and any new attempts made by our *Enemies* to bring us to the former *Settlement*: Can any one deny, that an *universal* approbation of the *Foundation* of it would fill every Breast, without exception, with an equal, unconquerable, zeal against all such attempts? Or, can any one think that this is an happiness to be hoped for, in the same degree: whilst *Uneasiness*, and *Dissatisfaction*, remain upon the Minds of Men, about the *National Guilt* incurred by one *Revolution*; never, according to some *Principles*, to be done away, without a voluntary yielding to another?

But I will not trespass any longer upon your *Lordship*. These last *Considerations* I am not so weak as to urge, as *Arguments* for the *Truth* of my *Doctrine*; but for its *Importance* to the present happy *state* of the *Nation*: As *Apologies* for my self, against those *perpetual Representations*, by which I must otherwise suffer, as if I were troubling a *Nation* with the matter of *Resistance*, without the least occasion, and for very bad ends; as if no *Case* of *Resistance*, in which the present *Generation* is concern'd; no *Establishment*, consequent upon that *Resistance*; no *contrary Decisions* of the *Enemies* of this *Establishment*; no

Enquiry of sober Christians, had made this a reasonable, or a tolerable, or lawful, undertaking for a *Minister of the Gospel*. Whether in this, or the foregoing, part of these *Papers*, I have offered any thing worthy of a *second Notice*; I must leave entirely to your *Lordship*. If I have; whether your *Lordship* will think fit to commit the management of your *Cause* to another hand, I know not. But I persuade my self, that, if you should do this: yet, for the sake of the Honour of *Almighty God*, and of our *Common Christianity*, your *Lordship* will not give a *Public Approbation*, and *Encouragement*, to any such *licentiousness* in writing, as, I fear, must reflect a dishonour upon your *High, and Holy Character*; and cannot but be shocking to all *Modest, and serious Christians*, who are seeking after *Truth*, more than *Diversion*.

But, whatever my *Fate* shall be; however others may provoke your *Lordship* to order, or permit, me to be treated; this Solemn Assurance I can give you, That, as I have conscientiously avoided every thing that might tempt me to forget that *Decency, and Respect*, which it is my *Duty* to regard; keeping only to what the justification of my self, and my *Cause*, hath made necessary: so, no resentment of the *past, or future, ill-treatment* of those who write under the *Covert* of your great *Name*, shall ever provoke me, either by my own, or any other hand, to return to your *Lordship*, or to the meanest of them, the like to what I have experienced; or rob me of the satisfaction of *forgiving* what I dare not imitate. May *God Almighty* never lay

lay to *their* Charge, what I have suffered from
any! May the same good God crown your *Lord-*
ship with his Favour, and Protection! confirm,
and establish your Health! and, after a Life of
all Worldly Prosperity, bring you to that Bles-
sed State, in which *Truth*, and *Happiness*, are
eternally, and inseparably, united! These are
the hearty Prayers of,

My Lord,

Your Lordship's most Obedient,

and most Humble Servant,

BENJAMIN HOADLY.

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Postscript.

Postscript

I beg leave, my Lord, upon this occasion, to take notice to your Lordship, that a certain Author, who writes the last Publication of your Doctrine, entitled, The best Answer ever was made, &c hath, under this pretence, given me just ground of loud Complaint. It is not, my Lord, that He openly insults the Memory of Mr. William, and that Revolution is not at all surprising, or that He openly avails the Conference of it, for which your Lordship hath expressed great zeal; or that He insinuates, as if his Reverend had been written on the side of the Administration, whilst He means the Establishment, and Administration, before the Revolution: As some Papists have protested a zeal for the Established Church, meaning that, Established before the Separation of our Protestant Princes. It is not that He hath nearly laboured to make the minds of Her Majesty's Subjects uneasy, that

Postscript.

I Beg leave, my Lord, upon this occasion, to take notice to your Lordship, that a certain Author, who wrote the last *Vindication* of your *Doctrine*, intituled, *The Best Answer ever was made, &c.* hath, under this pretense, given very just ground of loud Complaint. It is not, my Lord, that He openly insults the Memory of K. William, and the *Revolution*; (which is not at all surprizing;) or, that He openly ridicules the *Consequences* of it, for which your Lordship hath expressed a great zeal; or, that He insinuates, as if his *Rebearsals* had been written on the side of the *Administration*; whilst He means the *Establishment*, and *Administration*, before the *Revolution*: As some *Papists* have professed a zeal for the *Established Church*, meaning that, *Established* before the *Usurpation* of our *Protestant Princes*. It is not, that He hath heartily laboured to make the minds of Her Majesty's Subjects uneasy at that

that *War*, which, *She* hath often declared, *She* thinks most just and necessary; and at that *Toleration*, which, *She* hath assured her *Parliament*, *She* will inviolably maintain: At the same time declaring, as seriously as such Principles permit him, the *Queen's Administration* to be perfect in every kind, p. 73. It is not, that He hath endeavoured to make the Nation dissatisfied with the *Taxes*, and *Losses*, in this, and the foregoing *Reign*; by setting against them, the *Peace*, and *Security*, and *Plenty*, of those former *Reigns*, to which these Difficulties are entirely owing. It is not, that He hath charged this long *War*, as a blot upon the *Revolution*, and the present *Establishment*; the necessity of which is entirely owing to the *Arbitrary Power* of the *Common Enemy*, and the *Strength* gained by him under the inactivity, and supineness, of the *Former Establishment*; and the declaration, and prosecution, of which, is indeed one of the great *Benefits* of this present *Establishment*: Because without it, *Europe* in general, and *Britain* in particular must have been ruined; because it was equally necessary to the interest of both, either with, or without, the *Revolution*; and yet, unless the *Revolution* had here succeeded, would not have been entered into. Nor is it, that He passeth over in silence the miserable

miserable Condition, in which We all had been without this hated Revolution; and the Extreme Misery of the French Nation, merely through Absolute Monarchy, and the want of so happy a Revolution there. It is not on these accounts; tho' some of these must be entirely disagreeable to your Lordship. But it is, because He could not persuade himself to spare even the Queen herself, by whose Clemency He lives unmolested. If you please to consult the last page of his Preface, you will find there, that He first wrongfully chargeth your Lordship with maintaining that, in Hereditary Monarchies, the Right unalienably descends; and me, with treating you roughly upon a contradiction, which never so much as enter'd into my thoughts; and then takes occasion to illustrate this invention of his own, by an instance out of the 2 Chronicles, 23. ch. where the High Priest declares the right of Joash, one of the Sons of the Former King, v. 3. Behold, the King's Son shall Reign, as the Lord hath said of the Sons of David: Tho' saith this Author, Athaliah, (who was the Queen in possession) called this Treason, because it was against De Facto. For adds He, she had reign'd in quiet possession Seven Years. If your Lordship can doubt whom this Author means by the King's

King's Son; and Queen *Athaliah*; it is enough to consider that He had not the least occasion given him to mention this Instance; or, only to cast your Eyes upon the last words, *Seven years*. For the Scripture saith, *Athaliah* had Reign'd but *Six years*; and was enter'd into her *Seventh*. But we know a good Queen, who hath not deserved such Treatment from the *Non-jurors* themselves, that hath Reigned in quiet possession *Seven years*; and is now entered into her *Eighth*. May God long protect Her against such *Friends* at Home; as well as against her *Enemies* Abroad! But, I hope, our zeal will be common, and equal, against the pretences of such Men. What there is of Argument in his Book, mine will be the labour to examine, and consider seriously, when I come more largely to treat of some Points. But I persuade my self, your Lordship will rather thank, than blame, me, for mentioning this: Since I abhor the thought of making You responsible for the ungoverned Sallies of other Mens zeal; and since it will give you an opportunity of shewing all dislike, and giving all possible discouragement to such dangerous Writers. And I hope that such repeated attempts of the *Common Enemies*, will plead my *Apolo-*
gy with all the *Friends* of the present
 Establisb-

Establishment, for my repeated endeavours to prevent the increase of *Principles*, which, we see, are of so fatal and pernicious Consequence to the *Queen* herself; as well as the whole *Protestant Succession*.

I beg leave only to put this *One Case*, before I conclude. This professed *Non-juror*, whose *Principles* oblige Him, in Conscience, to wish, and design, the Dissolution of the *Present Establishment*, is ever representing me, as maintaining such *Principles*, as are inconsistent with the *safety* of all *Governments*. I take this opportunity, therefore, of appealing to all who read this, to judge what the meaning of this can be. If He hath a secret reserve within his own Mind, that the *Present Government*, is *No Government*, properly so call'd; because it is not settled upon his only lawful Foundation; and because his *Principles* can allow to *No Woman* any *Right* to *Civil Rule*: Then, it is manifest, He deceives the World with *Words*; and may in his Conscience believe that the *safety* of this *Government*, improperly so called, depends entirely upon the *Truth* of my *Principles*; (as I dare say He doth;) even whilst He declares them inconsistent with the *Safety* of those *Governments*, which alone, according to Him, deserve that name. But if, in the words,

words, *All Governments*, He permits us to include this *present Establishment*; which, He knows, He cannot so much as submit to, because it is founded upon that *Resistance* which I defend: then, let any one judge, whether, if He *truly* thought my *Principles* destructive of it, He would not rather permit me quietly to work for the good of his *Main Cause*; than persecute me, for doing real Service to his *Master*, after the most virulent, and opprobrious manner. Let any one judge, whether, if He truly believed that my *Principles* were prejudicial to the *Safety* of her *Majesty's Government*, and the *Protestant Succession*; He himself would chuse the direct *contrary Principles*, to inculcate upon the Nation, in order to serve the *Interest* of the *Pretender*, who is set up against Her *Majesty*; and of the *Former Establishment*, which He openly defends: That is, in one word, whether He can think *my Principles* destructive of a *Government*; whilst He himself chuseth the very contrary as the most likely to bring about its destruction; and often expresseth an hope of compassing his *End* in time: Or, whether his chusing the *contrary Principles*, in order to ruine the *present*, and restore the *Former Establishment*, be not a Demonstration that He himself thinks that the

Present

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Present Government, and the Protestant Establishment, cannot be safe, and secure, without my Principles.

for doing real service in his Master's
 good of his Master's cause; than persecute me,
 rather pointing me quickly to work for the
 Principles of the Slave of it. He would not
 judge, whether, if He sawly thought my
 defence which I defend; then let any one
 to, because it is founded upon that Ka-
 He knows He cannot.

F I N I S.

F I N I S.



430
T O S T R I P T

Protest Government, and the Protestant
Church, against the life, and liberty, and
the principles of the



VIII.
QUERIES

Recommended to the
AUTHORS
OF THE
Late DISCOURSE
OF
Free Thinking.

Written in the Year, 1713.



VIII

QUERIES

Recommended to the

AUTHORS

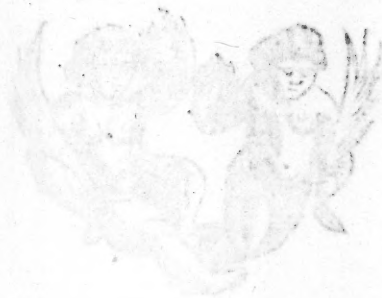
OF THE

Late DISCOURSE

OF

Free Thinking.

Printed in the Year 1741.



QUERIES

Recommended to the

AUTHORS, &c.

Qu. I. **W**Hether *that* can be justly called *Free-Thinking*, which is manifestly *Thinking* with the utmost Slavery ; and with the strongest Prejudices against every Branch, and the very Foundation, of all Religion.

II. Whether, if all the Absurdities of Physicians, from the time of the first Professor of that *Art*, were collected into one Body, it could justly be esteemed a good Argument for the total Abolition of all *Physick*.

III. Whether the false Mony that is put upon Men sometimes, hinders them from believing that there is any good Coin ; or from accepting it, when it is offered them.

IV. Whether, therefore, the feign'd Miracles, and false Pretenses of many to Inspiration, and divine Commission, be an Argument against the Truth of any such thing.

V. Whether all that is quoted by these *Authors* out of *Bishop Taylor*, and several others, doth not furnish an excellent Argument for all *Believers* in

Jesus Christ, to bear with one another's Differences : And whether it be not very unjust to extend *that* to the Prejudice of the Foundations of all *Religion*, which good Men have spoken with an hearty concern against the ill Temper, and the Violences, of *Bigots* ; and which was designed, and tends directly, to the Preservation and Security of those Foundations.

VI. Whether this, as well as the ranking some of these Men themselves with *Atheists* and *Infidels*, be not a very ungrateful and base return to their noble Endeavours, and hearty Zeal, against the *Abuses of Religion*; and all *Superstition*, *Inhumanity*, and *Church-Tyranny*.

VII. Whether the Follies, and Inconsistencies, and ridiculous Opinions, of many *Christians*, or *Divines*, pick'd up in the Course of above 1600 Years, can in Justice be produced, as Arguments against all Religion, any more than the differences amongst Philosophers, can be an Argument against *Reason* it self, and every thing in Philosophy ; or than the differences amongst *Atheists*, and particularly the Absurdities in *Epicurus's System*, will be allowed by these *Authors* to conclude against *Atheism* itself.

VIII. Whether such Representations of Christianity, and such positive Assertions, as run through this Treatise, to the Prejudice and Condemnation of all Religion; and particularly of the Belief of a future State, do not too evidently shew, that the design of it was, not to incite Men to an impartial Examination, but, to influence Men to the utter Condemnation, of all Religion.

IX. Whether it be a sign of greater Knowledge, or Honesty, to represent *Solomon* as an *Infidel*, because
he

he introduceth an *Infidel* speaking; to represent *Him* as denying a future State, who talks so plainly in the same Book of a Judgment; to represent *Him* as an Enemy to the *fear of God*, (which is in this Treatise, without distinction, called *Superstition*;) whose repeated Maxim it is, *That the fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom*; and whose Conclusion in that *Free-Thinking Treatise of Ecclesiastes*, is, *That to fear God, and to keep his Commandments, is the whole of Man.*

X. Whether it be a sign of that Integrity which Infidelity produceth, to represent that Fear of God, which hath nothing servile nor terrifying in it; which is nothing but such a Reverence as directs, and secures Men's Obedience to his Laws, upon the same Foot with that Fear of the Gods amongst the Heathen, which was indeed *Superstition*, and which taught Men to have no other Notion of their superiour Beings, but that of Tyrannical, Cruel, Barbarous Lords, delighted with the Blood, Misery, and Torments, of their Votaries.

XI. Whether this, and this only, be not that *fear of the Gods*, which *Plutarch*, and the best Heathen Writers expose; and whether the Love of God, as the Sovereign Good, ought not to have been mention'd as the Principle of *Plutarch*, as well as his *Zeal* against the Fear of God falsely represented.

XII. Whether any thing can justify such a procedure against the *Christian Religion*, as is seen from one end of this Treatise to the other; but particularly in that impartial and honest Note about *Solomon*, introduced with an Air of solemn Banter, and made as remarkable as possible: And whether these Authors can give any greater Instance of Pre-

varication, or hiding Truth, in the worst of those whom they oppose, than is to be seen in this Passage: In which the *Gospel* is represented, I will venture to say, against their own Judgments, in the worst Dress of its worst Interpreters; and that Doctrine of *Eternal Damnation* of Mankind for the Sin of *Adam*, made the Fundamental of the Gospel, which these Authors themselves do not believe to have any Foundation in the Gospel; and such a particular Explication of the *Trinity*, and Satisfaction, expressly laid upon the Gospel it self, as they themselves know, and believe, never to have been delivered by our Lord or his Apostles. Now, can any thing be more disingenuous? Or is there need of any greater proof, that the design of these *Authors*, was not to invite to Examination; but to charge upon Christianity it self those Absurdities, which are to be found only in some *modern Systems* of *Divinity*?

XIII. Whether it be not of a piece with this, to speak of an universal Alteration of the Gospels, under the Emperor *Anastasius*, upon the Authority of an obscure Passage, which cannot be proved to imply any thing more than that some polite Scholars *had a mind* to publish the *Gospel-History* in a better and more beautiful Style; or something like this. Whether these Authors be not Scholars enough to know that *Idiotis Evangelistis*, could not then signify *Idiot Evangelists*, in the Sense in which we now use that word for *Natural Fools*; but only Men without polite Learning. If they be not; whether they should pretend to translate, and make Quotations. If they be; whether any thing can excuse such barbarous Usage.

XIV. Whether these Authors themselves can say, that the *Gospels* now in our Hands are any thing like

a Book mended, and beautified, by a polite Scholar ; nay, whether it be not apparent that they are the same which were quoted, and appealed to, before *Anastasius's* time ; and whether the *simplicity*, and freedom from *Art*, and *Cunning*, and *Trick*, which so often accompany *Polite Humane Learning*, be not an advantage on the side of *Writers*, who profess to relate only Matters of Fact ; and ought not to be esteemed a good Argument in their Favour.

XV. Whether it be not a very great mark of the impartial Regard of these Authors to *Truth*, that they produce the *various Readings* of the several remaining Manuscripts of the *New Testament*, with a manifest design of bringing a Disreputation upon the *Gospel* it self : quoting for this purpose, and *seemingly*, (though there is reason to think, not *really*,) approving the opinion of one *Divine*, founded upon no good Reasons. For, let the *various Readings* be never so many, the Questions are, whether they disturb the sense of the place to which they belong ; whether they do not often help to fix it ; whether any one point, made necessary by our Lord or his Apostles, be in the least affected by them ; and whether in the whole, they do not afford to all impartial Enquirers, a very strong and convincing Argument in favour of the *Gospel* : being Proofs of a vast number of Copies, Translations, and Citations, of these Books, more than of any other, with varieties so little material, with respect to the principal Points, and the main Matters, recommended to the World in these Books.

XVI. Again, whether it becomes true Enquirers, or Examiners, to allege, as of prejudice to Christianity, the Disputes about the Time, when the Books of the *New Testament* were formally all put into one Body ; and universally received. What is this to

true *Christianity*, which doth not depend upon modern Notions, either of *Inspiration*, or *Canonicalness*? Is it not true, and ought it not to have been acknowledged, that if we have faithful credible Accounts of what *Jesus* taught, and what he requires, this is sufficient for the Being and Security of *Christianity*: whensoever the particular Books of the *New Testament*, were collected. How unfairly then are Matters represented, as if *Christianity* depended upon the time when such a number of Books were gathered together into one *Authentic Volume*, by persons who know very well that it depends only upon this, whether the *Gospels* are not a credible account of *Jesus Christ*; and whether we ought not, upon that account, to receive him as sent by *God*? And, under this Head, ought it not to have been acknowledged by such great *Pretenders* to the *Love of Truth*, that, whatever Disputes there were about other Books, not only the *Gospels*, but the *Acts*, and *St. Paul's Epistles*, which give us a noble View of *Christianity*, were always uncontested Books?

XVII. Whether *Epicurus's Atheism*, and *Infidelity*, (which are acknowledged to have been founded upon Nonsense, and Absurdity,) can with any Justice be produced as a noble Instance of *Free-Thinking*, by those who themselves think the Grounds he went upon not to be worthy of any Man who can *Think* at all: And whether this be not a sign that *Atheism*, as *Atheism*, though without Foundation, is esteemed by some Men an excellent Recommendation.

XVIII. Whether it be not ridiculous, as well as absurd, to pass by the noble Beneficence, and universal Love and Friendship, recommended and required by the Christian Religion, and practis'd by the first *Christians*; and to extol *Epicurus* as carrying

ing Morality to an higher pitch in the case of *Friendship*, under pretense that the word *Friendship*, in a particular restrained Sense, is not in the *New Testament* : in order to magnify this absurd *Philosopher*, to pass by the Life and Death of *Jesus Christ*, the greatest Instance of Friendship ; (were he considered only as a *Philosopher* ;) and not to say a word here, in favour of his Doctrine, though it was chiefly designed to introduce an universal Friendship, and Beneficence ; and in general, every thing of good repute, or every thing justly esteemed amongst Men

XIX. Whether it doth not shew great impartiality, to put *Tully* into the same List with *Epicurus*, whom he constantly pursued as an Enemy to Humane Society, and to Truth. Whether it be Ignorance, or resolute Wilfulness, to represent *Him* silyly as an *Atheist*, and expressly as an Enemy to the Immortality of the Soul, (which he constantly maintains :) and that upon such weak Grounds as these,

1. Because he gives this as an Instance of a probable Opinion, *That they who study Philosophy don't believe there are any Gods* : Whereas probable in *Cicero*, or any other good Latin Author, never signifies probable in our modern Sense ; but only an Opinion that will bear a disputation, or that may be debated. Besides, that this is acknowledged by these same Authors to respect only such Gods as the common People then worship'd.

2. Because, in his *Tusculan Questions*, after having mentioned the various Notions of Philosophers about the Nature of the Soul, He concludes from them, that there can be nothing after Death : than which there cannot be imagined a more ignorant, or a more insincere, Representation. For he only reckons up the Opinions of some of the Philosophers. Nor doth

doth *He* conclude this, as his own opinion ; but only observes, that, according to the opinion of those he had then named, there could be nothing after Death. According to these opinions, saith he, there is nothing after Death. *His sententiis omnibus*, &c. And yet he is here represented as drawing his own Picture ; when he is only drawing that of some others. Just as if any one who should set down the opinions of *Hobbs* and *Spinoza*, with what follows from them, should be charged with making that Conclusion in his own Name, and not in theirs.

3. Because in a disputation, in his *Tusculan Questions*, He denies, and was understood by his Auditor to deny, the Immortality of the Soul. Whereas it is plain to any one who understands *Latin*, and *Sense*, that *He* only, for the present, drops *Plato's* Arguments for the *Soul's Immortality*; and endeavours to convince his Opponent of an Error, even supposing, for the present, the Soul not to be Immortal. For his Words there, *prætermittamus*, and *relinquamus*, are such as can signify nothing but dropping the Argument for the present : and this, because he thought he could carry his point without it. Nor are they proper words for one to use, who designed absolutely to deny the thing. The answer of his Opponent, or Auditor, is only an Embellishment to the Dialogue. He could not bear the thoughts of losing so pleasing a view, as that of the Immortality of the Soul, even for the present. And therefore He useth a very beautiful Expostulation ; and lets Him know that, even supposing it an Error, he could not part with it. Nay, his answer implies that *Cicero* himself had been the Instrument of his believing and expecting such an Immortality. It cannot surely be collected from hence by any, but such as are resolved to have it so, that *Cicero* could mean absolutely to deny, what he had taught his Auditor to expect ; or any thing more than to lay aside, for the
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the present, those Arguments, as his own Words imply ; and this, for the farther Prosecution and Embellishment of his Dialogue. But because these *Authors* speak with so much respect of this *Great Man* ; and have taken upon them to teach us all, how to understand him, by a *Key* which seems peculiar to themselves : I would farther ask, whether they ever read his Treatise, called *Cato Major* ; whether in *that* He doth not profess to speak his own Thoughts under the Person of *Cato* ; whether He speaks in *that* like a Man who absolutely rejected *Plato's* Argument, or like one highly pleased, and satisfied, with them ; whether that noble *Sentence* which begins, *O praeclarum illum diem*, &c. could be said by any Man, but *One*, not only possess'd, but ravish'd, with the glorious Hope, and Expectation, of Immortality ; and whether this *Treatise* of *Cicero's* be not alone enough to convince us that the *Free-Thinking* of those, who can thus represent His Sense, is either *No Thinking* at all ; or, *Thinking* with the utmost *Slavery* and *Prejudice*. For otherwise, how could *This*, and all that he saith in many other places, be over-looked : and *He* be set forth, not only as a Man of sense enough, to examine popular Errors, but as a down right *Infidel* and *Atheist* ? Whoever considers what is here said, of the usage this excellent *Writer* hath met with from these *Authors* ; together with their translating Latin Words merely by their Sound, as *Probabile*, *Probable* ; *Religio*, *Religion*, in our modern Sense ; and the like ; will also easily determine whether they understand *Tully* themselves ; or are fit to direct others with what *Bias* to read him ; or whether any of them are qualified to give us a *New Edition* of that *Noble Author*.

XX. Whether any thing can be imagined more unjust or more absurd, than the Usage given to
Socrates

Socrates by the same *Authors*. In one *Page* they give a noble Account of his Death, out of *Erasmus* ; from which it is plain, that He had such a Belief of a God, and such an Expectation of a Reward in a *Future State*, as supported Him under all the Injuries of his *Adversaries*, and under the Terrors of Death it self. But, for fear that this should go for a Proof of his being a *Religious Man*, and a *Believer* ; (which it must do amongst all who can think ;) in the very next *Page*, in order to take off that Impression, He is represented as discouraging all Enquiries into *Heavenly Things*. An expression used, we know, amongst Christians, and in the *New Testament* it self, for the good things of a *Future State*. That is, *Socrates* in one *Page* is represented as professing Himself to have lived with a constant desire of pleasing God ; and to die, with good Hopes of being happy in a *Future State*: And in the next *Page* is introduced as calling all *Fools*, who troubled themselves with Enquiries into *Heavenly Things* ; which to be sure these *Authors* would have to be understood in the common Acceptation of that Phrase ; and which they allege as a Proof, that *Socrates* did not make *Notions* a part of his Religion. That He made the *Notions* of a God, and of a *Future State*, i. e. of *Heavenly Things*, in our common Style, a part of his Religion, is plain from the account these *Authors* give us of what He said when He was dying. And that this *Sentence*, here quoted to the contrary, hath no relation to the contrary, will appear to any, who have a little Sense, and so much *Free- Thinking* left, as will permit them to look into the place of *Xenophon* here quoted : which is indeed as unaccountably, and as miserably, misrepresented as any thing can be. *Xenophon* is there vindicating *Socrates* from all appearance of Impiety. For He never, saith He, as many others did, troubled himself to discover how that which the *Sophists* called the
World

World, came into being ; and by what necessary Causes, (*τίσιν αἰτίαις*) every one of the heavenly Things was made. Nay, He endeavoured to prove those, who troubled themselves about such Things, to be Fools. Let these Authors consider, that the Persons whom He thus stigmatized, were Disputers about the Necessary Causes of the Universe, and of the Heavenly Bodies ; that these were the Heavenly Things, which He thought it absurd in Men (who have not Capacities for such Enquiries) to concern themselves about ; and that the Humane Things which He recommended at the same time, were all things which are of real Use and Importance to Mankind. Not Humane Things, in opposition to Heavenly Things, in the Religious Sense of the Phrase : But Humane Things, in opposition to Enquiries about the Necessary Causes of the Universe, and the Heavenly Bodies, and other things : which were accounted by Socrates not Humane, as being of no Importance to the Happiness of Man, and wholly out of the reach of a Creature so little acquainted with the Nature of things as Man is ; and which are in the next Sentence, called *Θεῖα*, i. e. not Divine Things, in the common Sense of the Words amongst us, but Things belonging to God, who alone fully knows, and comprehends, the Causes of all things. These things of Humane Concernment, Xenophon reckons up in a Paragraph very near to this here quoted ; viz. Enquiries about the moral and political Virtues : to which He adds, *And about other things, which those who knew, were esteemed by Socrates excellent, and good Men ; and those who did not know, to deserve no better Name than that of the lowest Slaves.* And least we should exclude out of this Number, the Notion of a God, we may learn, in the next Paragraph but One, how strict an observer of an Oath Socrates was ; and in that which follows, the Reason of this : Viz. because Socrates had this Notion of the Gods, That they knew
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all things, either spoken, or done, or so much as deliberated upon in Silence: which perhaps may prove, even to these Authors, that Socrates made some sort of Notions, and Speculations, a part of his Religion.

But to return, whence my concern for this excellent Man hath carried me, What can be plainer, than that *Socrates* expressly condemns Enquiries about *Necessity*, and such like things, which He thought of no importance to Man? And whom doth this touch, so much as those who produce Him to another purpose? What can be plainer, than that his Moral Excellencies were founded upon, and improved by, his believing *that God is, and that He is a Rewarder of those who seek him?* What can be plainer, than that He is the greatest Advocate in the Heathen World, for the *Necessity*, and Advantage, of minding *Heavenly Things*, in a Religious Sense? And lastly, what can be plainer, than that *He*, as well as others, hath been grossly misrepresented, after such a manner as cannot be excused, unless it be by this, that some Men are persuaded that all Methods are lawful for propagating so good a Cause, as that of *Infidelity*, and *Atheism*; or, that there is a *Blind Zeal*, and *Implicit Bigottry*, in this, as well as in *Popery*.

XXI. Whether it be not very unjust to apply the general Sayings of that great Man, my *Lord Bacon*, about that Suspicion of some Relations in History, which a true natural Historian ought to have, to the Prejudice of all Religion: And to lead the Reader to judge that he had the same Suspicion of all Miracles, which he expresseth of the *Prodigies* recorded by *Livy*.

XXII. Whether Mr *Hobbs's* several false Opinions, and High-Church Politicks, here laid to his charge
by

by these *Authors*, be not, in their own opinion, as great a mark of his *Slavish Thinking*; as his *Atheism* is, of his *Free Thinking*: And whether the producing *Him* in this *Catalogue*, with that censure, be not an Argument that *Atheism* and *Infidelity* are the things truly meant, however now and then colour'd over.

XXIII. Whether these *Authors* can ever make Reparation for the Injury done to the Memory of that great and good Man, Arch-Bishop *Tillotson*, by putting him into the same List with *Epicurus*, and Mr. *Hobbs*, against both whom he hath express'd himself with so particular a Severity in some parts of his Works; and by thus doing the work of his worst and bitterest Enemies. Whether his *Example* had not better have been imitated, than his Memory thus blackened; and the *Abuses* of Religion charged only upon the *Abusers*, and not upon Religion it self. Whether his Zeal against *Atheism*, and *Infidelity*, might not have been mentioned; as well as his Zeal against *Spiritual Tyranny*, and *Unchristian Cruelty*. Whether the Injury done by these *Authors* to his great Name, be not already apparent, when a *Conscientious* Author hath already taken an handle from them, to misrepresent him in the grossest manner: contrary to the whole *Tenour* of that *Sermon* in which he speaks of the *Mischiefs* of *Popish Zeal*; and contrary to his express Declarations concerning the *Christian Religion*, which *He* in the same *Sermon* vindicates from the least shadow of Guilt upon that account. But, as it was to these *Authors* purpose, to rank this good dead Man in such Company: so is it to the purpose of his *Popish*, and other furious Enemies, that *He*, who could not enter into their blind and unchristian Measures, should pass for an *Atheist*, and an *Infidel*. So mutually do *Atheism* and *Papery* assist one another!

XXIV. Whether, upon the whole, considering the unfair Treatment Religion hath met with from these *Authors*; the false Representations made use of to its Disadvantage; the little idle Stories pick'd up and vented; the great Scandal such Treatises must give to all serious Persons; the great Handle they afford to all the Enemies of true Liberty of Conscience, for their unchristian Treatment of those who differ from them: considering (I say) all this, whether there may not be some grounds for Suspicion, that there are, amongst these *Authors*, some of the Enemies to true Liberty, and impartial Examination; than whom no Persons are more rejoiced at such Performances as this.

XXV. Whether the Thanks of all Friends to true Religion, and true *Freedom* of thought, will not be due to these prudent and worthy *Authors*; if occasion should be taken, from this *Licentious Treatise*, to destroy all *Liberty* in *Religion*; and to lay the Foundation of *Popery* amongst us.

XXVI. Supposing *Atheism* to be better, in itself, than that *Superstition* which tortures a Man's own Breast, and sets the World about him in Flames: whether, nevertheless, a thorough Belief of an overruling Providence, and a State to come, and of the Truth of Christianity, and the Conquest of our Passions founded upon this Belief, and a practice of all the lovely Virtues of the Gospel, be not vastly preferable to both; full of the Supports which *Atheism* explodes, and void of the Torments which *Superstition* feels.

XXVII. Last of all, Whether there can be any thing in *Atheism*, (as there certainly is in true Religion,) to hinder any Man from acting the part of
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the most Superstitious and fiery Zealot upon Earth. Are not all the Cruelties and Barbarities, so justly complained of, in Popery, supported by the Atheism of those who profess it, and of many of those who exercise those very Cruelties? Do not these Authors think that many of the Inquisitors themselves have been Atheists, as well as Jews? Will they not be ready to own, that many of the Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops, have been Atheists? And is it not their Atheism and Infidelity, which hath led them to maintain and support that Usurpation over Men's Consciences, which is so much for their own worldly Interest? Is there any thing to hinder an Atheist from professing Popery, in order to obtain a Crown, or a Mitre: and then, from using his Power for the promoting of the same Popery? Can it be determined, at this Hour, certainly, whether the whole Scheme of the Power, and Tyranny, and Persecution, of a neighbouring Monarch, hath not been owing to Atheism, rather than to Bigottry? What should hinder an Atheist from professing and acting the Bigot? What should hinder an Atheist, born with a little more Fire than ordinary in his Constitution, when it is for his present Interest, from ruining Nations and Kingdoms: and all, under pretense of God's Glory, and Zeal for the Church? How then shall Atheism, or Infidelity, put a stop to the madness of Zeal; when the Atheist and Infidel are themselves the Zealots? How shall Atheism give up the vast Revenues of Religious Houses; which are here complained of; when Atheists themselves turn Abbots, and Abbesses? How shall Atheism put a stop to Persecution; when the chief Persecutors are too probably Atheists themselves? and, What hope can we have of any Alteration in the World, for the better; unless we can persuade Men to be Free-Thinkers without Atheism, as well as Believers without Superstition: that is, Christians indeed, upon the Foundation laid by Jesus Christ; and not upon the

Authority of any Church, or Man, upon Earth Can it be said that this would make, either particular Persons, or humane Society, unhappy ? Or, can we possibly hope for the like relief from *Atheism*, and *Infidelity* ? And to what purpose then, are *Atheism*, and *Superstition* so often compared, when it is so plain that, in these last Ages, it is the *Atheist* chiefly who hath acted the *Superstitious* ; the *Zealot* ; the *Inquisitor* ; and the *Tyrant* ?

POSTSCRIPT.

THE Author of these Queries confesseth that some of the Particulars mentioned in them, as designed plainly against the Belief of Christianity, are produced in the Treatise of Free-Thinking, under the specious Pretense of their being good Reasons, and occasions for a free and impartial Examination ; and not expressly declared to be intended against the Gospel, in the same Passages, in which the Authors of that Treatise produce them. But, as these Authors themselves, He verily believes, would inwardly laugh at any who should suppose them to have had any other view in this performance : So, lest any of their less heedful Readers should be led to think them too hardly dealt with, in being taxed expressly with such a Design, they are desired to consider the following Particulars ; which, though, in great Part, already mentioned in the Queries themselves, yet, deserve now to be placed altogether, in orser to be seen at one view, for the better Determination of this Point.

1. When Difficulties, and Objections, relating to any thing in the Bible, or Religion, are produced out of Excellent Authors ; no mention is made of the Design of those Authors, or of the Answer they themselves make to any Abuse which may be made of such Difficulties.

ties. *The Story of mending the Gospels is produced out of Dr. Mills : but not a word said of his Vindication of the Gospels; now in our Hands, from that Imputation : and the like perpetually.*

2. *No favourable Word, concerning the Gospel itself, is spoken, which doth not look more like Banter, than the Sense of the Writers. As, our most Holy Faith, and the like ; when there is least Reason to think them serious.*

3. *Many sly Insinuations, at the same time, are drop'd against it : even where the Difficulties cannot possibly touch the Foundation upon which that stands.*

4. *The Evangelists are called Idiots by these Authors. I say, By Them : Because the Word which they have so translated signifies no such thing.*

5. *The Note about Solomon, is a standing Proof, that their real Design was to ridicule the Gospel : laying those things upon the Gospel, which they do not believe to be in it ; and proposing a wonderful Scheme, as they call it, as the great End of the Gospel-Revelation.*

6. *Left we should be at a Loss what is intended under the Cover of impartial Examination, (which no Man of Sense can oppose,) styl'd, in the Cant of these Authors, Free-Thinking; we are presented with a Catalogue of Free-Thinkers, which hath several Things in it worthy of Observation. As,*

1. *Socrates represented as an Enemy to all Enquiries into Heavenly Things : though the greatest Instance of Faith, in the Heathen World.*

2. *Epicurus produced as a distinguish'd Free-Thinker : who banished Providence, that is, God, out of the World, by the most absurd System that ever enter'd into the Brain of Man ; and who can have no other pretense to this Title, but his Atheism.*

3. *Cicero applauded under this Name : and, to prove him a Free-Thinker, (that we may not be at a loss what is mean't,) great Zeal is shewn, to distort many*

Passages in his Writings, in order to prove Him to have had no Belief of the Immortality of the Soul ; and this, I say, expressly against those who cite Him as an Enemy to Free-Thinking, pag. 138. where Free-Thinking certainly signifies, Infidelity.

4. Solomon represented as a Free-Thinker, no otherwise than by being represented as no Believer of the Creation of the World ; or of the Immortality of the Soul ; or of a Future State. . Here again Free-Thinking doth not signify Examination ; but Infidelity.

5. Synesius, a Free-Thinker, merely as an Infidel about the Resurrection.

6. Mr. Hobbs a great Instance of Free-Thinking, pag. 170. notwithstanding his several false Opinions, particularly in Politicks. On no other Account, possibly, can He be produced, under this Title, but for his known Atheism : And particularly, He is a great Instance of Free Thinking, with these Authors, because He hath furnished them with Arguments to prove, that there can be no such thing as Free-Thinking in the World ; but that all Thoughts, and Actions, are the necessary Effect of Matter and Motion. Excellent Freedom of Thought !

After this, let any one doubt, if He can, what sort of Free-Thinking, all that is produced in the first Part of this Treatise, is designed to promote ; or, suppose it possible, that the chief View of these Authors could be any other, than the Promoting that Free-Thinking, which they themselves contend to be Atheism, and Infidelity.

F I N I S.

FOUR
SERMONS
CONCERNING
Impartial Enquiry
INTO
RELIGION:

And the TWO EXTREMES of
Implicit Subjection; & Infidelity.

Preach'd in *January*, 1712,-13.



FOR

SERMONS

CONCERNING

Impartial Enquiry

INTO

RELIGION

And the Two Last Things

Impious Subjects; & Impious

Preached in London, 1712

By
JOHN
WILKINS
M.A.
Rector of St. Dunstons Church
in the City of London

S E R M O N. I.

I. Theff. V. xxi.

Prove all Things : Hold fast that which is Good.

THERE is no greater Sign of the sincere Intentions, and generous Design, of the first Preachers of the Gospel, than those frequent Appeals, which we meet with, in their Preaching and their Writings, to the Evidences and Supports of that Religion, which they preached to the World. It shews that they neither knew, nor suspected, any thing like a Cheat, in it : It shews both that they thought it True, as well as Important ; and that no Enquiry or Examination of any Impartial Man could do it a prejudice. When they preach'd to the *Jews*, who were to be convinced, in great part, by their former Notions, as far as they were grounded upon former *Prophecies* ; we find that they of *Berea* were highly commended for searching the *Old Testament*, to see whether what the *Apostles* reported from thence, were true ; and that their *Enquiring Temper* was esteemed an instance of a generous, well-born Soul. They of *Berea*, saith the Author of the *Acts* of the *Apostles*, Chap. xvii. v. 11. were *more noble*, i. e. of a better make and disposition of Mind, than some others. They were, as the word imports, of too generous and well-temper'd a Spirit, either to embrace blindly what was proposed to them ; or to re-

ject it as blindly, without farther Enquiry. *St. Paul*, in his Speech before *Agrippa*, makes the same appeal to the *Prophets*, *Acts* xxvi, 27. which implied in it the same desire that the matter should be determined by an *Impartial Enquiry* into them. When He preach'd to the *Gentiles*, who had the natural Light of Reason to direct them in their Searches, He did not appeal to those *Prophets*, of which they knew nothing; but to a matter of Fact, into which they might enquire. Nor doth he expect them to believe that God shall judge the World, upon his own Word: but only as they should find it true, that he had given proof of it, by raising *Jesus Christ* from the Dead. *Acts* xvii. 31.

When Christians increased; and many Pretenders to mighty spiritual Gifts appeared amongst them, some of which were *Deceivers* and *Impostors*; the same *St. Paul* requires it of Christians in the Text, to prove all things that come to them, under the notion of *Divine* and *Spiritual*: which he could not do with any decency; unless it were so, that the *Christian Religion* itself desired and invited all Men to examine into the Proofs upon which it stood. *St. John* requires the same of Christians, to try the *Spirits*, i. e. to examine all pretenses to Miracles; and supernatural Revelation: and to receive, or reject them accordingly. *1 John*, iv. 1. *St. Peter* is likewise very express, even with respect to *Christianity* itself; that *Christians* should be always ready to give an Answer to every man that asketh them a Reason of the hope that is in them. *1 Pet.* iii. 15. which supposeth that their Religion and their Faith in *Christ* are built upon the best Evidence; and that their Faith was not required of them, but upon that Evidence; and that it is their Duty to enquire into, and remember, those Grounds upon which their Hope is built. And this whole Conduct was agreeable to that of their Master, our *Blessed Lord* himself: who
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constantly called upon those about him to examine into his Works; to try him whether he were from God or not; and who declared, that the guilt of those who rejected Him, consisted in their rejecting that Evidence He brought along with him, and those Proofs which he gave of his Divine Commission. Neither did He, nor any of his *Apostles*, (as far as we have any accounts of what they either said, or did,) ever require of any Men to believe in Him, upon his own Authority or Assertion: or upon any ground, separate from that which I have now mention'd; I mean, the Evidences, and *Proofs*, which He gave of the truth of his Pretensions.

Now, it is very observable that there are *Two Extremes*, which Men have run into, with respect to this matter. The *one* is, that of those Professed Christians, who, contrary to the whole Conduct of their Master, and his Apostles, require the assent of their Inferiors to every thing which they please to define and settle; as to a thing dictated by God himself: and this under the notion of Authority and Infallibility; without allowing any Questions, or Enquiries, about it. The other is the *Extreme* of those, who, under pretense of Examination, but, without the reality of the thing, explode all Belief in *Jesus Christ*; and recommend Infidelity to the Minds of Men. In the middle, between these *Two Extremes*, is that happy temper of Mind, which renders Men Impartial: which is equally an Enemy to that *Spiritual Tyranny*, which commands and terrifies Mankind into an open profession of any thing; and to that partial and unequal *Bias*, which makes Men catch at any Trifle, and set up any little Objection, as of force enough against those moral Evidences, and plain Proofs, upon which the truth of the *Gospel* relies.

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In speaking farther, therefore, upon the *words*, I have now chose, I shall be naturally led to these *Three Particulars*.

I. To make some just *Observations*, relating to that *Impartial Enquiry*, and *Examination*, spoken of in the *Text*.

II. To consider the unreasonable *Proceedings* of *Those*, who are in either of the *Two Extremes*, I have just now mention'd. And,

III. To draw some useful and important *Observations*, from what I shall have said.

I. I shall endeavour to make some just and useful *Observations* relating to that *Enquiry* and *Examination*, spoken of in the *Text*: and this, under these *Three Heads*.

1. The great Advantage, and Necessity, of *Enquiry* and *Examination*, into what we are, in an extraordinary manner, called upon to embrace, as *Religion*, and the Will of God.

2. The Temper of Mind, absolutely necessary to this *Enquiry*: without which, we can neither embrace, nor reject, any thing proposed to us, with Justice, or Innocence. And,

3. The *Subject* of this *Enquiry*, with respect to the offers made to us in that *Religion*, in which we have been educated.

1. I say, The great Advantage, and Necessity, of *Enquiry* and *Examination* into what we are, in an extraordinary manner, called upon to embrace, as *Religion*, and the Will of God.

That *Almighty God* hath a Right to call upon his Reasonable Creatures in any method, which may seem best to his Wisdom, cannot be denied. That it may possibly seem best to his Wisdom, to call upon them, by a *Person* sent into the World, and Commission'd

mission'd, in an Extraordinary manner, must be granted by all, who believe the Existence of any such *Being* in the Universe. That it is not only barely possible, but probable, that he would do so; is what will easily be assented to, by any who know the *Nature* of *God*, and consider the State of Man in this World. But, let us put it as low as possible. The bare possibility of the Thing, is enough to shew us our Interest, and Duty, in this Case: Because it is always the Interest, and Duty, of *Reasonable Creatures*, to act as *such*.

The Advantage and Necessity, therefore, of this Enquiry we are speaking of, is the *Reasonableness* of it. And the *Reasonableness* of it lies upon this, that it is at least possible, that Almighty God may call upon his Reasonable Creatures, in an extraordinary manner; that, if he should so call upon them, it is of the utmost importance to them to regard his call: that therefore it behoves them to attend to what comes to them in a very extraordinary manner, under that appearance and profession; that it is their Interest, as well as their Duty; that Gratitude, as well as other Obligations, draws them to this; that, without it, they may possibly lose the greatest opportunity of being made happy in the favour of God; that from it they cannot possibly receive any harm or detriment either to Soul or Body; but that they will certainly receive at least the reward of a good Disposition, and Reasonable Temper of Mind. From all which, I say, follows the great Reasonableness, that is, to Reasonable Creatures, the great Necessity and Advantage, of enquiring into what is proposed to them, in a very uncommon, and a very extraordinary manner, as a Message from the *Great God*, whose Creatures they are; and Creatures, endow'd by Him with that Reason, which constantly directs Them to follow the safe and secure method of acting. This being premised, I come now,

2. To

2. To speak of the *Temper*, and *Disposition*, of Mind which is necessary to all Persons who would behave themselves, in this affair of *Examination* and *Enquiry*, after a manner acceptable to God. And this, I think, in one Word, must be a *Disposition* of Mind, removed, on one side, from *Credulity*, or a foolish readiness to believe every strange thing that offers itself: and, on the other side, from those outward Vices; or that inward and unreasonable *Bias*; which are as so many Chains and Fetters upon the judging Faculties of a Man.

1. I say, It must be a *Temper* of Mind, removed from what we call *Credulity*; or a readiness to believe every uncommon and strange thing, that offers it self, to be really what it pretends to be. This disposition of Mind cannot be suitable to a *Reasonable Creature*: because it is so well known that many have been, and many more may be, the *Cheats* put upon a credulous World, by Men fitted for that purpose. Reason hath some certain Maxims to appeal to, in judging: and these are all in vain; unless they are regarded by an Enquirer. In vain is it, that we know the Nature of *Almighty God*; if we must not examine, whether what professeth to come from Him, be worthy of Him. In vain is it, that we know *Virtue*, and *Vice*, to be direct opposites; the *one*, the Happiness, the other, the Misery, of understanding Natures, if we must not consider whether the encouraging Vice, or the discouraging Virtue, be not a sufficient Reason for rejecting any proposal made to us. In vain do we speak of *Truth*, and *Falshood*; or of the differences of things: if all things be a like to us; and We swallow every thing that offers, without distinction, or difference. *True*, and *False*, are, indeed, but *Mock-sounds* to a Man that believes every thing equally, that any Man, or any sort of Men, will put upon him for *Divine*. And if such an one pretends to enter into an *Enquiry*; it
is

is only a search after something to fill his Head with. It is not an *Enquiry* into what is built upon good grounds; or what not: but only a seeking after a little present Food for his Credulity.

Nor can this Temper of Mind be any more acceptable to *God*; than it is agreeable to the nature of *Man*. For tho' a Person of this Disposition will believe what comes from *Him*; and receive it as such: yet this will be by chance, and not by Reason and Evidence. This will be, because he is disposed and resolved, to believe every thing: not because he finds this more reasonable, or more accompanied with evidence, than the most monstrous Absurdities, or greatest Falshoods imaginable. And then, this same Temper of Mind will lead the Man to believe the grossest absurdities of Almighty God himself; and to embrace every Pretender with a Zeal equal to that which he shews for the Person who brings the justest Credentials, and the plainest characters of God's Mission, along with him. Now, what Thanks, or Praise, can be due to such an *Enquirer*; with whom all will be *Equal*? unless perhaps which is often seen, the more unaccountable, or the more absurd and monstrous any thing is, the more fond and tenacious will he be, of it. The result of such a Man's pretended *Enquiries*, is not what can be called *Faith*; which is a *Virtue*, as it is worked by due means, and, as it is the consequence of our attending to proper Evidence: but rather *Superstition*, prompted either by *Fear*, or *Folly*, to take all *Pretenses* equally for *Truth*; all *Uncommon things* equally for *Miracles* wrought by God; all *Appearances* equally for *Realities*. This is such a submission of *Reason* and *Understanding*, below the dignity of Humane Nature, as They only want to be exercised, who have nothing to shew that can bear an *Enquiry*, or stand the Test of an *Impartial Examiner*: but such an one, as cannot be required by Almighty God, who expects that we should

should distinguish His *Truths* from the *Falshoods* of Men ; and make a difference between His Works, and those which are not so ; and receive, with discretion, as well as humility, what He saith ; discerning between *Tricks*, and *Great Works* ; between the Person who truly bears his *Character*, and him who only pretends to do so. But,

2. On the other side, the *Temper* of an *Enquirer* into any offers made to Mankind, in a very extraordinary manner, in the name of God, must be likewise far removed from those *Outward Vices* ; or that *Inward Pride*, and *Unreasonable Biass* ; which are as so many *Chains* and *Fetters* upon the Judging Faculties of a Man.

I here mention, not only those notorious open *Vices*, which will often blind a Man's Eyes ; and make him reject whatever contradicts or condemns them : but also those more secret sentiments of *Pride*, or *Prejudice* ; *Resentment*, or *Revenge* ; which have often proved as strong Bars against receiving Truth, as the prosecution of sensual Pleasure ; or the greatest *Covetousness*, or *Ambition*, or *Worldly-mindedness*. And I mention these particularly, because there have been Instances, in these later Ages of Learning and Knowledge, of Men, who, merely out of an inward *Pride*, or *Resentment* against others, have denied the evidences, even of *Mathematical Knowledge* it self ; and rejected it, either in whole, or in part, because it hath brought some Shame upon themselves, and their own Understandings. It is really true, and what shews the corruption of Humane Nature, that Light shall be Darkness ; that *Fear* shall be more than *Six* ; or any thing like to these shall be affirmed ; nay, and pretended to be proved ; by Men, who have *Pride*, or *Resentment*, or *Indignation*, working within. So that it is not enough to say, that a Man is not what we call commonly grossly *vicious* and *Immoral*, in the way of *Pleasure*,

or

or Worldly-mindedness, to prove him to be *Impartial*, and free from Bias. For *Pride*, and *Revenge*, are Immoralities within; which bend the mind as strongly as any other *Vices* in the World. *Personal Prejudice* will often put a Bias upon it, as powerful as *Debauchery*: and *Pique*, and *Resentment*, will hinder Eye-sight it self; and turn the plainest *Evidences* into Doubts, and often into Falshoods, with the Man that is actuated by them. Having thus mentioned the Dispositions of Mind which should be, in all who enquire into any Proposals offer'd to the World, in God's Name;

3. I shall now say something of the *Subject matter* of our *Enquiry*, with respect to that Religion particularly, in which we have been educated; or, the Offers made to the World by *Jesus Christ*.

The *first* thing which offers itself, is this, Whether He gives sufficient evidence of his coming from God. For, without this Foundation, all He saith, concerning the express Promises of God, and the Conditions of his favour to us, will be, at best, no more than so many probable Conjectures; or such Arguments as Reason and Philosophy can supply the World with. Under this Head therefore, you must consider his Doctrine. If this be, in all respects, worthy of an Holy, Just, and Good, God; if it tends to the interest, ease, and quiet, of Rational, Intelligent Creatures; if it tends to the Interest, and Peace, of Humane Society, by making the Members of it what they ought to be; In a word, if it be the revival of the great Law of Reason, upon stronger motives than ever it was plainly promulgated upon, before: this will incline you, in favour of such a Teacher, that his *Doctrine* is worthy of God; and bears upon it the Characters of that Being, by whom He professeth to be sent.

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You must, in the next Place, consider the number, nature, and openness of his great Works, to which He appealed constantly himself : particularly his *Resurrection* from the Dead ; which he foretold, as the Sign, or Mark, upon which he would put the truth of his Pretensions. You must enquire into the *Evidences* that you have, that the Historical Account of these things is worthy of credit, as transmitted down to us.

These are the main Subjects of *Enquiry*, under this Head, relating to the Truth of our Lord's Mission. And, upon *Enquiry*, it will be evident to any one, that we have such *moral Evidences* of our *Truth* of these Histories, recorded in the Gospels, as would be thought sufficient to influence Humane Conduct, in any other respect ; and that, from the truth of the *Facts* recorded in those *Histories*, an *Impartial Enquirer* cannot but find ground to believe in *Jesus Christ*.

The next *Subject* of *Enquiry* after this, will be, What it is that He himself delivers to his immediate Followers, as his Religion, and the Will of God : Because, if we do not confine our selves to what is his *True* and *pure Religion*, we may wander eternally in Mazes of Humane Contrivance ; and never extricate our selves out of those difficulties, which may be brought upon us, in our Enquiries. *To whom can we go for the words of Eternal Life* ; but to Him, who is the *Way*, the *Truth*, and the *Life* ? When we once acknowledge Him sent from God, it is at his Mouth only, that we can seek certain and useful Knowledge ; to settle our Faith, and secure our Praise. It is to no purpose for us to enquire after the Doctrines of Men, which *They* would make necessary to Salvation ; when we have his Words, and his Decrees, to have recourse to. But, our only *Great Concern*, in order to the secure Conduct of our selves, is to enquire what it is that He himself layeth upon us, as necessary ; what He himself requires
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of us, in God's Name, to believe, or practise, as a Condition, without which we shall not be happy; and what his *Apostles*, in their *Epistles*, or Conversation in the World, do expressly lay upon us, as a Condition of happiness; and as received from their Master, to that very purpose.

This Rule will be of vast use to us, with respect, both to such, as will be objecting things against the Religion of *Jesus Christ*; and to such as will be imposing things, as of necessity to *Eternal Salvation*. For, as the Enquiry then is natural, Whether those things objected against *Christ's Religion*, be really in it, as He delivered it to the World: So, if we find them not there; we cut off, at once, the whole ground of the *Objection*. On the other hand, Are these things, which others would impose upon *Christians*, as *Laws of God and Christ*, any where to be found in the *Gospel*, as delivered to the World, by *Himself*? If not; the Answer is easy to those who would add, to his Laws, unreasonable Burthens; and bind them upon Men under the severest Penalties. Thus, When we see, in the *Gospel* itself, the great and only design of bringing Men to Happiness, by believing in *Jesus Christ* as sent of *God*, in order to a constant and regular practice of all Virtue; of whatever is reasonable and becoming: this will give us such a View of *Christianity*, as will make us able to reply to all *Objections* against it, taken from any such *Representations* of it, as are different from, or contrary to, this.

These Two are the Subjects of Enquiry, to all who hear of the Offers made in the *Gospel*. Of these they are competent Judges, for the most part; if they will but apply the same care, and diligence, and caution, which they use in any Worldly Affair. But when they are sent farther; and called upon, to enter into the particular Disputes be-

tween the several Sects and Parties of *Christians*: and, on every side, required to give their *Assent*, with equal positiveness and assurance: When they are carried into the difficulties of other parts of the *Bible*, which have exercised the Understandings of the most learned part of the World for many hundred Years, without being conquered, and explained; and when an *Explicit* understanding all these, in one particular Sense; (and this never to be settled, or established, with any certainty;) is equally required of them: Then, I confess, *Enquiry*, and *Examination*, may well seem frightful and discouraging. But then the *Question* recurs, for the ease and satisfaction of all Persons concerned: *viz.* Did *Christ* himself, and his *Apostles*, put these matters upon the same foot with believing in *Him*; and doing the *Will* of his *Father*? Did He come into the World to require *Impossibilities*? Either to perplex the Understandings, or to distract the Consciences, of Men? When the *Question* is answered, What doth *He* require, as a Condition of Happiness; all such Points will be seen to be but *secondary* ones: in which *Honest*, and *Understanding* Men may differ; without losing their *Charity* for one another, or their Title to the Favor of their common Master.

If any one, therefore, should object, that *Enquiry*, and *Examination*, into *Christ's* Religion, are full of endless Difficulties; it is easy, upon this foundation, to give a satisfactory Answer to such an *Objection*.
As,

I. It is a great satisfaction to consider, that the very Disposition of mind ready to receive Truth, when it appears so to be, is highly, in itself, acceptable to *God*; and will be rewarded by Him. So that, supposing the *Search*, or *Examination*, into the *Christian Dispensation*, to require length of Time; or to be full of Difficulties: yet, here is a perpetual satisfaction, that the sincerity of Mind, and Intention,

on, which every honest Man carries about him, is it self of that value in the Eyes of God, that it will make the Man the Object of his Favor. It is this inward Integrity, which God, who sees the Heart, values above all things. Even under the Cloud of great Mistakes, God mercifully looks upon this; and is ready to reward it with his Favor. Otherwise, How hard would be the condition of a weak and fallible Creature, if his *Eternal Happiness* were to be put upon his being in the Right in all things; *i. e.* upon his being *Infallible*: and not upon his *Sincerity*, or *Honesty*; which is the only thing he hath thoroughly in his own Power? The best Humane Understandings may err; and may be very slow in finding out and apprehending some Truths: and the meanest, much more. But then, the meanest Understandings may have *Honesty*, and *Sincerity*, and *Integrity*, accompanying them. And supposing them not to have arrived at the knowledge, or perception, of the *Truth*, they are searching after: Yet, the very *Sincerity*, and *Integrity*, with which they are pursuing this search, is the thing which Almighty God highly values in them; and which He will certainly reward. So that, you see, there is nothing discouraging in the supposal of the length and difficulty of a *serious Enquiry* into the Truth of the *Christian Religion*: because, the *Honesty*, and *Integrity*, of the *Enquirer*, will always render Him acceptable to God; and intitle him to his Favor. But,

2. The *Enquiry*, I am speaking of, requires no length of Time; nor contains any Difficulty in it, worth the naming. It cannot be long, before the falshood of any Man's Pretenses, who comes, without Authority, as God's Messenger, must appear to a serious Person: either from his Doctrine carrying along with it the marks of Falshood, and being unworthy of the nature of God, or the nature of Man; or from his want of

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sufficient and well-attested Works, to prove his *Mission*. But where the *positive* Proofs are plain and evident; and the moral *Evidences* such as convince Men, and influence their Lives, in parallel cases: there is no need, either of a great Capacity, to comprehend these Proofs; or of a great deal of Time, to perceive their Force. And this, I say, is the case of *Christianity*; as instituted by *Christ*.

Nor ought these Proofs, and Evidences, to be esteemed so burthensome, or of so little importance, as to be sent out of the Memory, or forgotten, under the notion, that they were once considered, and found true: but always remembered, as the Reasons of that Hope, which is in *Christians*; according to St. *Peter's* advice. For, What great burthen can they be, to Men, who are concerned so much in them, as *Christians* are? What great task, to one of any ordinary Capacity, if he be questioned, Why he believes in *Jesus Christ*, and expects a *Future State*? to answer, Because He himself arose from the Dead, after a life of Holiness, and great Works; and after delivering a Doctrine to the World, worthy of God in all respects? And, if he be asked, Why he believes these things? to answer, Because they are *Matters of Fact*, delivered, with the greatest marks of sincerity, by Persons, who professed they saw, and heard, what they relate; by Persons, who had no Interest to serve by this *History*; who endured bitter Persecutions, and Death, to attest these *Matters of Fact*: And because, in any other case of Humane Conduct, these would be accounted the most prevailing *Evidences* possible? I say, Where is the great burthen of this, to the Memory, or Understanding, of any common Man?

I doubt not, if the Riches and Grandeur of this World, were to be purchased upon such a foundation; it would never slip out of the Mind of the meanest

meanest Person: but always be uppermost; and discover itself superior to all other concerns that could come in his way. And if any Persons should employ their Leisure, and their Wit, to persuade the World, that there is nothing in all this: not by invalidating such *Testimonies* about *Matters of Fact*; but by puzzling Mens Brains with abstruse, Metaphysical, shews of Reason; (of which the greatest Understandings are perhaps but very imperfect Judges, and the vast bulk of the World no Judges at all;) I doubt not, but that if Worldly Interest were concern'd, Men would presently answer to such Niceties; that they are only like such *Trials of Skill*, as some Disputers used of Old, to prove, that there could be no such thing as *Motion*; that these are not the *Arguments*, upon which *Humane Life* ought to be conducted; and that the *Moral Evidences*, upon which such *Facts* rely, are a more lasting and effectual conviction, to a Creature so framed as man is, than any, of another sort, that can be opposed to them.

But I have said enough to shew you, upon what good Grounds, and with how much Justice, the *Christian Religion* may encourage, and demand, your serious *Examination* into it; and with what *Dispositions* of mind, it ought to be performed. I shall proceed, in my following *Discourses*, to examine the *Conduct*, on one side, of those, who bring a Scandal upon it, by putting their own Inventions, and Absurdities, upon an equal foot with it; and then cry out upon the *danger*, and *impiety*, of any *Enquiry* into *Religion*: and, on the other side, of *Those*, who reject it, without any apparent Reason; comparable to those *Evidences* which support it, and make it a Matter *worthy of all men to be received*. For the present, I shall only add, that, if what I have offered, carries any Satisfaction along with it; if it leads to the discovery of any thing sufficient to influence the

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Conduct of Humane Life, and to revive that Hope, and Expectation, which we have been taught to have, in *Christ Jesus* : Nothing remains, but that, when we have proved it, and found it true, We hold fast that which is Good ; and direct all our present Views, and all our Actions, by this Hope of happiness to come ; which God, that cannot Lye, hath promised to those, who truly believe in his Son, and conscientiously obey his Will.

S E R M. II.

S E R M O N. II.

I. Theff. V. xxi.

Prove all Things : Hold fast that which is Good.

I Come now, as I propos'd in the *Second Place*, to examine the *Conduct* of *Those*, who are in either of those *Two Extremes*, which I mention'd in my *last Discourse*.

The *first Extreme*, is *that* of those *Profess'd Christians*, who pretend, with great Zeal, that They have a Right to demand an Unlimited *Submission* to all their *Doctrines*, and *Appointments* : and condemn all *Trial*, and *Examination*, in their *Inferiors*, as a Crime of very fatal Consequence. The *Conduct* of these Persons and the *Grounds* which they are known to go upon, I design now to enquire into : and at the same time to shew the great Vanity, and Absurdity, of such monstrous Pretenses.

Now, in that *Church*, which alone *openly* declares this *Blind, Implicit, Submission* to all its *Decrees*, and *Determinations*, to be the true *Faith* of a *Christian* ; You will presently find it all resolv'd into that *Infallibility*, and *Unerring Judgment*, which is affirm'd to be lodg'd somewhere in it. If you ask the *Advocates* of this *Cause*, how they came by this *Infallibility* ; and how they prove their pretenses to it to be well-grounded : you will receive such sort

of Answers, as themselves would be ashamed to give, in any Worldly matter; or any Affair of common importance.

1. Some of them will tell you, that our *Saviour* promised, *Matt. xxviii. 20.* to be with his Church, *i.e.* with *Them*, to the end of the World: and consequently, this Church is Infallible; and may justly claim an *Implicit Submission* from all Men, without any Questions, or Enquiries, about her Impositions.

To this it will be easy to answer, that the utmost that can be proved to be intended in that Promise of our Lord's, is this, that He would be assisting to his *Apostles*, and those who should succeed them in the propagation of his Religion, in their due execution of that great and important Office; that He would be their Supporter and Protector, in it. And, besides that nothing more than this can possibly be proved to be the intent of this Promise: If you consider the *absurdities* which must follow from the differing turn that hath been given to this Passage, by the modern pretenders to Infallibility, or to any *Authority* not to be gainsayed; you will be the more convinced of the weakness of this Proof. For they, who fix so enlarged and unbounded a Sense upon those Words, do, in effect, represent our *Saviour*, as speaking to this purpose, "*Lo, I am with you; I will not only be your Director, and Guide; but the Director and Guide of all who shall succeed you in professing to Teach, or propagate, my Religion. I will be with them, in whatever they shall say, or inculcate upon Men; whether contrary to what I have taught my self, or not. I will be with them, in all their Contradictions of one to another; in all their Absurdities and Follies; in all the Methods they take of propagating Religion; whether by Fire, and Massacre, or by Instruction, and Argument. Let them say what they will, let them do what they will, in their Zeal; Let them decree Black to be White,*" and

“ and White to be Black ; still it is My doing; it is
 “ my Will it should be submitted to : For *Lo, I am*
 “ *with them to the end of the World.*

What Absurdities, you see, What Blasphemy, may not Men lay here upon this *Text*, if they will put such an absolute, and unlimited, Interpretation upon it ? Whereas, the Office of the *Apostles*, and those who succeeded them in the *Ministry* of the *Gospel*, was that of being *faithful Witnesses* of what they had seen and heard of our Blessed Lord ; and of his Life, and Death, and Doctrine. They themselves had a Trust committed to them ; and that was, to preach to the World his *Resurrection*, and his *Religion* : the *Religion* delivered to them by himself. They had no Authority to add to his Words, themselves ; but their Commission was, to instruct Mankind, as they should have opportunity ; and to impart to the World those concerning Truths which they had received from Him. This Promise, therefore, could not convey, even to *Them*, any Authority in saying or doing whatsoever any of them pleased ; but only an assurance of help, and support, in their due performance of that Office, which was intrusted to them ; that of preaching the *Laws* of *Christ*, without adding to them, or diminishing from them. And that this was not a promise of *Infallibility*, even to the *Apostles* themselves, in their whole Conduct, is plain from the behaviour of *St. Peter*, after this, with respect to *Jew*, and *Gentile* ; and from the necessity *St. Paul* found, to withstand him to his face, in that part of his Conduct, which *St. Paul* thought to the prejudice of the *Gospel* at that time. Yet, notwithstanding this, we have seen this *Infallibility*, even confined peculiarly to *St. Peter* ; and to his pretended *Successors*, considered as such : which He himself never claimed, in that absolute Sense, in which *They* have, since his time, done it.

2. In the next Place, if you be not contented with such Interpretations of this *place of Scripture*, as are utterly inconsistent with the design of the *Gospel*; *They* refer you to another, in which Our Lord speaks, of *hearing the Church*; and of accounting those, who *hear it not, as Publicans and Sinners. Mat. 18. 17.* And here again, they infer an absolute unlimited Duty, from a very limited and particular Expression; and shew as much absurdity, as they can well shew about the interpretation of any one *Text of Scripture*.

Our *Blessed Lord* is here speaking of private Quarrels between Man and Man; and the method of bringing Persons to Reconciliation one with another. And they presently interpret what is here said, as if it related to *Articles of Faith*; and an *Authority* in themselves, to make *Terms of Salvation*: Which Our *Saviour* never sends us to learn from any Man, or any collection of Men, upon Earth; any farther than as they may faithfully report, what He himself, alone, was authorized to require, and ordain.

The word *Church*, in this place, plainly signifies a Congregation, or Assembly of Brethren, in whose presence the matter is related; and to whom it is referr'd: And from hence, *They* presently collect something about the *Church*, in another sense of the Word; as it signifies the *Ecclesiastical Rulers*, whose business it is to perform *spiritual Offices* amongst *Christians*; which was not indeed formed, or instituted, at the time when these Words were spoken. He that is not willing, after the method here proposed, to listen to the determination of his Neighbours and Fellows; and to come to Peace and Reconciliation; is said to be *One* justly to be looked on, as a very bad Man: And from hence, *They* absolutely and indefinitely conclude, that whoever shall not blindly give himself up to the positive determinations which *They*, under the name of the *Church*, shall please to make, about *Articles of Faith*, and *Terms of Salvation*;

tion; whosoever shall not swallow all their Decisions, without any Questions, or Enquiries, is to be accounted as an *Heathen*; and, what is more, to be treated with such Severity, and such Inhumanity, as cannot lawfully be practised towards any *Heathen*; and such as the *Gospel* abhorrs, upon any pretense whatsoever.

3. After this, they will carry us to those Texts, in which our Lord declares to his *Apostles*, that, as his *Father* sent him, so sends he them; and that, *He that beareth them, beareth Him*; and the like: And from hence, They will conclude resolutely, that what they call the *Church*, hath the same right to be heard in whatever it decrees about Religion, or that which it pleases to call Religion, as the *Apostles* themselves had, in delivering that to the World, which *Christ* entrusted to them. For, it is but resolving, that whatsoever was said to the *Apostles*, is to be interpreted as said chiefly to *St. Peter*; and after him, to the Rulers of one particular Church in the World: and they think the Work done.

Now, there are several ways of putting a stop to such weak *Sophistry* as this. The first is, That supposing the *Apostles* commissioned, by such Expressions as these, to exact an *Implicit Belief* of every thing they should say; it doth not follow, that They who succeeded them in some parts of their Office, can have such a Commission from hence: because their Assistances and Powers from above, were greater than can be claimed, since their time; because they had the power of *Miracles*, on extraordinary occasions, to appeal to; in a word, because many things were, and might well be, said to them, which could not belong to any, but themselves peculiarly.

But another thing is this; which, I believe, will be found to be very true: That the *Apostles* themselves had no Authority to publish any thing,
but

but what they had committed to them by *Christ*. They were Witnesses, entrusted with what He thought fit. They were not the Makers, or Decree-ers, of that Religion which was to be delivered to the World. But that was settled by our Lord himself before; and only committed to them, to be reported to Mankind: And they were to be heard, only as they were the sincere Preachers of what they had received from him. Besides this, as I have already observed, the *Apostles* themselves never claimed, by virtue of any such Words of our Lord, any power of demanding an *implicit belief* of what they delivered: but always referr'd to the proofs they gave of the Truth of it; always spake to Christians (in the way, little used by those who pretend to succeed them in their greatest Powers,) of *Reasons* for their hope; of *trying the Spirits*; and of *proving all things*, and *holding fast only that which is good*. So that the result is this. Supposing the Apostles had required *Implicit Faith*; or an Implicit submission to every thing they should decree: it would not be a good Argument, why *others* should afterwards do so; who had neither their Instructions, nor their Assistance. But this supposition is groundless. For the *Apostles* claimed no Privileges, but to be heard as faithful *Relaters* of the *Doctrine*, and *Religion*, delivered to them by their Lord: and always encouraged their Auditors to examine into the *Reasons* of things; and to *try*, and *prove*, in general, whatever came to them, under the notion of Divine, and Supernatural.

So vast a difference is there between *Those*, who had no Interest to support, but that of Truth and Righteousness; and *Those* who have Worldly Pomp, and Grandeur, and Riches, to procure, or preserve, or increase. The *one* is for *Tryal*, and *Examination*: which never can hurt, nor injure, Truth. The *other* is for an easier method: for yielding up all pretense to

to Understanding, and Reason ; and going into that Way, which will encourage all the *Absurdity* and *Folly* in the World ; and make Truth and Falshood, Light and Darkness, the same things, and equally eligible. For, let there be but an Universal Readiness to swallow whatever shall be ordered ; the *Question* among those who are to decree, will seldom be, what is Reasonable ; or what is Fitting ; or what is the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ* : but what is most for the advancement of Power, and Honour, and Riches.

4 But, to return : If these *Texts*, to which the Pretenders to *Infallibility* in themselves, and an *Implicit Subjection* in others, appeal, seem to fail them at any time ; they then are forced to appeal to that hated Reason, which at other times they so much explode. They will tell you, that it is highly reasonable and fitting, that there should be this method of putting an end to all *Doubts*, and all *Controversies* ; that Men, being subject to Mistakes and Errors, it is very necessary there should be somewhere a Judge, to whose Determination they should all blindly submit ; and that, this being so necessary, to be sure, *Almighty God* hath been pleased to take care, that there should be such a *Judge* ; and consequently such a blind Submission should be due from all Persons : and that, one *Church* only pretending to this *Infallibility* ; it belongs to that, and to no other. But this way of treating Mankind, cannot be compared to any thing better, than to the dealing of some *Empiricks*, who should set up upon this bottom, that Mankind is subject perpetually to a multitude of Diseases, which render their Lives very uneasy, before the time of their Natural Death comes ; that it is highly convenient, there should be an infallible way of curing all these Diseases ; that, therefore, it is not to be supposed, but that *God* hath, in his Providence, taken care that there should be such a way ;

way : and that, consequently, no other Persons but themselves, pretending to cure all Diseases infallibly, *They* ought to be looked upon, as the *Infallible Directors* of *Physick*; and all Persons concerned, ought to apply to them, in their Distress. But alas! this is but insulting the Misfortunes of Mankind, instead of curing them; it is a sort of triumphing over their Miseries, rather than shewing them a way out of them.

For, in the *first* place, supposing Man so framed by *Almighty God*, that, after all his best *Enquiries*, and his most serious Examination of things, he may err; this ought to teach us, that *Error*, in an honest Mind, is not that damnable thing which some Men would make us believe; that the great design of true Religion, respects *Practice*, and not *Theory*; and that the Father of all things knows how to make all reasonable allowances for the Involuntary, and undesigned, mistakes of his imperfect Creatures.

In the *next* place, the Argument is not good, that because a thing would be highly convenient, therefore *God* hath certainly order'd it: Because it is plain, in Fact, that there are multitudes of Unhappinesses, and Inconveniencies, belonging to weak and mortal Men, for which He hath appointed no certain Remedy. And, in the Case before us, it is fully sufficient, if He punishes men only for their wilful, and obstinate Sins; and if he leaves their unavoidable Errors, and Frailties, to be the Subject of their mutual Charity, as they are of his own divine Compassion.

But then, in the *third* place, supposing the *Premises*; How shall we know, Whither to have recourse? Supposing such a *Judge*, or such an *Infallible Church*; where shall we find it? Why, certainly, they answer, Where there is but *one*, that so much as pretends to it, *That* must be it. Which is, as I said just now, as if an *Empirick* should tell us, There is

no other Person in the World, that so much as pretends to cure Diseases infallibly, besides my self: therefore, I certainly can; and you ought all to come to me. As if the modesty, or humility, of *others*, who cannot thus insult the common Sense of Mankind, were an Argument against them; and, as if *They*, who pretended to most, had always most in them.

But, supposing another *Judge*, or another *Church*, should set up for *Infallible*; and claim the same Subjection; (which is not an impossible Supposition;) Whither should we then go? The Argument would be destroyed: and we could take no other method, but to examine, *first*, Whether there is reason to expect to find any such *Infallibility* any where; and, *secondly*, which of the *Pretenders* to it, have the real Title. And this would reduce us to that necessity of Examination, by Reason, and Revelation, which I am contending for; and destroy the End for which this Argument is alleged.

But again; Supposing us to come, ready furnished with all *Implicit Submission*, to the only *Church*, which ever pretended expressly to such an *Authority*; even in this very *Church*, with all its boasts, *They* cannot tell us, exactly, where to apply for the comfort of this *Infallible Authority*. Some send us to *One* Person at the Head; some to whole *Councils*; and some to *both*. Which ever way they pitch upon; it is not more certain that Light is contrary to Darkness, than that what hath been decreed by *one Pope*; hath been revers'd by *another*; that what hath been determin'd in *one Council*, hath been annull'd in *another*; and so, forwards and backwards, from the beginning, to this day. To what distress then, would they reduce Men; first, to persuade them, that a weak frail Man, or a collection of fallible Men, are *Infallible*, and unerring in their Decisions: and then to lead them a round, from

Contra-

Contradiction to Contradiction; and from the belief of one Age, to the contrary belief of another; without Satisfaction, and without end? How much more like *Men*, and like *Christians*, would it be, to acknowledge themselves to be but *Men*; to leave the unavoidable Errors of Mankind to the Mercy of God, as He himself hath done; and to claim no more Subjection, than what *Reason*, and the *Gospel*, give them a Title to.

I must not here forget *another Pretense*, which comes much to the same: *viz.* That the great divisions, and differences of Opinion, amongst other *Christians*, are owing to their not acknowledging such an *Implicit Subjection* to this *Infallible Judge*. The *Answer* is easy, and plain: For, 1. That this would be no certain Cure, is evident, from those many and high *Divisions*, amongst Themselves, who plead for this Subjection: which are, in these last Days, come to a very great and flaming height, in many Instances. And, 2. How can it be otherwise, when in *one Age*, favor is shewn to one Opinion; and in *another*, favor is shewn to the contrary: When *one Infallible Judge* is of one Party; and the Next that comes, is of another: And when Determinations are perpetually made, according to Interest and Favor. And then, 3. If *Jesus Christ*, and his *Apostles*, have not so plainly determined many Points; but that there is room for differences amongst *honest Believers*: Why should any *Judge*, after them, pretend to settle Religion, better than *They* did; or, why should *Christians* be harder, and more severe, upon one another, than *God himself* will be upon any of them? Sincerity, and Uprightness of Heart; Righteousness, and Holiness of Life; Humility, Charity, and universal Love and Friendship: *These* are the Things, which the Father of our Lord *Jesus Christ* seeks after. And the truly honest Christian need not be afraid of the *Terrors* of those, who take
not

not their Maxims from the *Doctrine*, or *Example* of *Christ*; but from this *World*, and the *Interests* of it.

I mention these *Terrors*, because, when every *Art* fails, then, last of all, the *Ignorant* are to be terrified into this *Submission*: and to be told, that it is a *Sin* to entertain the least *Doubt* about this *Authority*; and such a *Sin*, as will be their utter and eternal *Ruine*. It is parallel'd with rejecting the *Gospel*, and opposing *Christ*: And so *They* are to make up by *Terror*, what is wanting in *Argument*. To which, I confess, nothing can be replied; but that there is nothing like all this in the *Gospel* of *Jesus Christ*. He came into the *World* to reconcile *Men* to *God*, by leading them to amendment, and to all *Holiness*. Many *Works* did he perform, to convince the *World* of his *Authority*. He appointed his *Apostles*, and *Ministers*, to go on in the same good *Design*. He feared not the *Light*; and therefore appealed to it. He hath given no *Commission* to any, to pretend to a *Lordly Authority* over the *Understandings*, or *Consciences*, of *Mankind*. But, as his *Religion* consists not in *Niceties*; and aims at nothing but the happiness of *Mankind*; and is founded upon *Truth*: He hath left it to the *Evidence* that supports it. Vast and unconceivable *Prejudice* hath been done to it, by *Men's* pretending to be *Wiser* than He; to add to his *Institutions*, and his *Doctrines*: and to impose upon *Men* their own *Additions*, under pretense of an *Incontestible Authority*; and under any sort of *Worldly Penalties*.

I have now sufficiently shewn you the great absurdity of *Those*, who have run into this *Extreme*: and the *Contradiction* of it to the *Behaviour* of our *Lord*, and his *Apostles*. I shall take the next opportunity to speak of the *Other Extreme*, I mentioned at first.

S E R M O N. III.

I. Theff. V. xxi.

Prove all Things : Hold fast that which is Good.

IN my last Discourse, I considered, and examined, the *Grounds*, upon which those professed *Christians* go, who set up Themselves for *Guides* to their Brethren ; and require under the Penalties, of this World an implicit, and blind Submission, without any Enquiries, to all their Determinations. And, I hope, I shewed you, how void of all support either from the Light of Reason, or the Gospel of *Jesus Christ*, such Pretenses are ; how contrary to the nature and interests of Truth, which ever desires to be looked into ; and how contrary to the Conduct of our Lord, and his *Apostles*, who encourage, and applaud, a sincere and inquisitive Temper, with respect to Religion.

Secondly, I come now to the Conduct of Those Men, who are in the *Second Extreme*, I mention'd at first ; and to consider those *Grounds*, upon which such Persons profess to go, as, under the appearance, and pretense of Examination, but, without the thing itself, reject the *Gospel* ; and recommend Infidelity to the World. And this I shall do, in such a method, as that these pretended *Grounds*, which they go upon, may appear ; and, at the same time, the real design,

design, and very great partiality of those who go upon them. Of this *Conduct* I shall give *Three*, or *Four*, particular *Instances*: which are constantly seen to be the chief and avowed supports of this *Extreme*.

1. One principal Point, I shall mention, is this. When the different or Contradictory Notions, or absurd Opinions, of *Divines*, or other *Christians*, are represented so, as to lead unwary Persons to make them an *Argument* against the *Gospel* itself: it is very evident, that the design is not to recommend *Truth*; but to prejudice Men's minds against what ought only to be proposed to their Fair *Examination*.

I confess, it is very shameful to consider, that *Men* should not be contented to be *Men*; and to think, for themselves, *one*, one way, and *another*, another; that so many should, with Violence and Passion, be seen to lay the same stress upon their own Interpretations, and Conjectures, which they do, upon the main design, and plainest declarations, of the *Gospel*; and others, to oppose them with their own particular *Schemes*, of another sort, in the common methods of Heat and Violence. But these are the *Movements* of *Humane Nature*, got loose from the guidance of *Reason*, as well as of the *Gospel*: And therefore, let *Them* take the shame of this, to themselves, who deserve it. But what is this to *Christianity* itself: which contains in it, neither their *Doctrines*, nor their *Spirit*?

If a Man should collect all the contradictory Opinions, and absurd Notions, of the *Philosophers* of Old; and of those who profess to follow only *Natural-Light*; and represent the foolish manner, in which the *Text* of *Reason* hath been explained by its *Interpreters*; and if these absurdities should be made an *Argument* against *Reason* itself, and its plainest and most uncontroverted Maxims: Would not this be

more absurd, than even those Absurdities themselves; which are pretended to give ground to it? Would it not be easy to reply, that *Reason* is very ill treated by such *Opponents*; that the *Law of Reason* remains firm and stable, notwithstanding that its professed Interpreters have erred grievously; that it is highly absurd to deny the first Principles of all Science, and all Certainty, because some who profess to build upon these Principles, have grossly mistaken in the *Consequences* they have drawn from them; that it is the most unfair, and unsincere thing in the World to lay *that* upon *Reason* itself, which ought to be charged solely upon the Weakness, or Passion, of those, who, professing to follow it, could not keep up to it, either thro' Incapacity, or Inadvertence, or Prejudice, or Vice. But, tho' the same Persons will not, (as indeed they ought not to,) allow this to be a good Argument against the *Use of Reason*: Yet we find them, too often, treating the *Christian Religion* after this manner.

Let us then, upon this occasion, apply what hath been said, in the *Case of Reason*, to *that* of the *Gospel of Jesus Christ*: And we may safely put it upon this *Issue*; which is but equitable and reasonable. Let the *Gospel* be charged with nothing, but what itself contains. Let *Jesus Christ*, and his *Apostles*, who were the Preachers of his Doctrine, be charged only with what themselves Preach'd and Taught. But let not the absurdities, or follies, of *Christians*, be laid at the door of that *Religion*, which, in its Original, knows them not. By this means, the ground of such sort of *Objections*, is wholly removed. For the *Answer* will presently offer itself; when the *Enquiry* is about the Truth of our Blessed Lord's Pretensions; and not about the Understanding, or Conduct, of his Followers. What is this to the purpose? What, if Christians, have thus contradicted one another?

ther ? What, if they have opposed, anathematized, and sacrificed, one another, to a furious Zeal for their own particular Explications of their *Master's* Doctrine ? What, if many Absurdities have been vented, and propagated ? How very unfair, and unjust is it, to charge these upon our Blessed *Lord*, or his *Apostles*, who have nothing like them in their *Preachings* ; who have none of these Contradictions ; none of these Absurdities ; in their *settlement* of our Religion : and never gave the least encouragement to any such Conduct, in their Followers ?

I grant, indeed, if the Dispute were about the Behaviour ; the Understanding ; or Impartiality ; of all who have professed to interpret the *Gospel* ; or to frame Schemes and Systems of it : If our Faith were to be made for us by these ; then, the Objection would have some force ; and these Contradictions and Absurdities, might well be so often brought in. But, God be thanked, this is not the Point. What hath been said by weak, and fallible, Men ; tho' affirmed with never so much positiveness ; tho' back'd with never so much Worldly Authority ; tho' strengthen'd with all the Penalties of this World, and of that which is to come : All is nothing to Men heartily concerned about their Religion. The Point is, what our *Lord* himself requires ; and what his *Apostles* themselves deliver, as from *Him*. This is the important Enquiry : and this ought to be strictly observed by all, who profess to examine into His Doctrine. It is a most equitable Rule, not to lay that upon his Religion, which He never himself put into it : because it was He himself, who was to deliver it from the *Father*, ready framed ; and because He never gave Authority, even to his *Apostles* themselves, to make any addition to that *Scheme of Doctrine*, and *Salvation*, which He delivered to *Them*. *St. Paul* expressly affirms this, that the *Apostles* themselves were only *Stewards of the Mysteries of God* : in

whom He affirms *Faithfulness* to be the principal Point. Moreover, it is required in *Stewards*, that at Man be found faithful, 1 Cor. iv. 2.

Nothing indeed can be more unjust, than, in pretended *Enquiries* after the *Truth of Christianity*, to cast upon our Lord himself, and his Religion, all those *Contradictions* which have been vented by any of his professed Disciples; or those *Absurdities* which weak Men have unhappily fasten'd, as *Interpretations*, and *Commentaries*, upon what He said, or did: unless the *Case* were so, that the *World* had no Account of his *Proceedings*, but what was to be pick'd out of the *Commentaries*, and *Systems*, of numberless *Writers*. Whereas, it is far otherwise. His *Gospel* lies open. His own *Declarations* of what God absolutely requires, are as plain as well can be, before *Art*, or *Passion*; *Ignorance*, or *Learning*; have perverted them. If any thing can justly be offered against his own *Conduct*, or his own *Doctrine*; He himself refuseth not to hear it. But it is but just to demand, that the faults of others be not imputed to the faultless; nor the Follies of Men, to Him, who never encouraged them.

They who will not consent to this *Equitable Rule*, may as well charge all the Vices, and Villanies, of any professed *Christians*, upon the *Gospel* itself. But then, the true method is, to look into that: and it will be quickly found, that they are not only not encouraged, but absolutely condemned, there. How would it be liked, by some Persons, if all the *Luxury*, and *Intemperance*, and *Wickedness*, of those who have profess'd themselves *Epicureans*, should be charged upon *Epicurus*, their Master. Would it not presently be answered, That this could not fairly be done: because He certainly placed pleasure and Happiness, in *Temperance*, and many of the *Moral Virtues*: as is plain from the most *Authentic Accounts* We have, of his own Life, and *Doctrine*; which

which ought to be the measure of our judgment and Censure of him. I cannot indeed deny but that this is common Justice, due to all. But if his Advocates will contend for this, in *his* Case, who certainly taught Men to cast off that regard to any superior Being, which might have been a great bar against *Vice*, and a great inducement to *Virtue*, amongst his Followers: Then, certainly must they themselves be ashamed of not following the same Rule, in judging concerning a *Greater than He*; *One*, who had all his Personal Virtues, in perfection, with none of his Follies and Absurdities; and *One*, who taught a Doctrine worthy of all Men to receive, upon Principles able to support them in the *Practice* of it.

I grant indeed; nay, I contend for it; that these great *differences* of Opinion, amongst many honest and Learned *Enquirers*; that these contradictions to one another, and absurd Notions, fixed by many of them upon their Religion; are excellent Reasons for mutual forbearance; great Arguments that God will not Judge Christians at last, by the *Truth* of their *Speculations*, but by the sincerity and integrity of their Searches after *Truth*: and strong inducements to all, to look impartially into the *Gospel* itself; in order to know what our *Lord* himself hath taught, and what He requires. Thus far these Differences, and Absurdities, may justly be urged. But when, under pretense of all this, these *Contradictions* have another Turn given to them; when many insinuations against the *Gospel* itself, are interspers'd; when some of the greatest of these *Absurdities* are represented as the *fundamentals* of the *Gospel* itself; and, at the same time, *Infidelity*, and *Atheism*, artificially recommended, as the result of Just Reasoning: then, it is more than suspicious, that these particulars are so carefully collected, merely as *arguments*, or *prejudices*, against the *Gospel* itself. But there cannot

be imagined a more unjust procedure, than this is: which is no better, than casting off a *Religion*, not for what *is* in itself; but, for what *is not* in it; I mean the Weaknesses, or Absurdities, of some who have professed it. But again,

2. Of a piece with this *Procedure* is, the picking up multitudes of little *Stories*, which have not half that evidence to support their Truth, which the *Facts* of the *Gospel* have; and which, supposing them true, signify nothing to the first Institution of *Christianity*: and the embellishing and venting *these*, in such a manner, as manifestly tends to the prejudicing the Minds of unwary Persons, against Christianity itself. An *Art*, in which many of those excel, who seem disposed to banish all belief of the *Gospel*, out of the World! But, how unjust this is, a very little consideration will shew us.

For, Is it a wonder, that, in the course of many hundred Years, many things have happen'd, in the Conduct of Men, (who are ever Weak, and often prejudiced, and Passionate,) which may be justly enough turn'd into *Ridicule*; or which cannot be justified by the Rules of that *Religion* which They have professed. Suppose, for instance, that *some*, in process of time, have turn'd Christians, for low ends; or with false *Views*, and base Designs: either for worldly Advancement; or to find a refuge from the Sins which they had committed in other Professions? Or, suppose that *others* have turn'd *Apostates* from *Christianity*, because of the vile Behaviour of many *Christians*; and their pretending to greater spiritual Powers, than could be justly claimed by them? Or, suppose, that a profess'd Christian hath sometimes talk'd, as if he had little belief of some or other of the main *Articles* of *Christianity*: I say, supposing these, and the like *Facts*; yet, What are these to the *Gospel*, as delivered to the World by *Jesus Christ*? In *that*, there may be sufficient Reasons for *honest* Men to believe

believe in *Him*; notwithstanding that, many Years after his Death, some became *Christians* upon other Grounds. In *that*, there may be sufficient Reasons against any *Believers* apostatizing from his *Religion*; notwithstanding that there have been *Apostates*, upon other Reasons: which do not at all affect his *Religion*, as *He* left it. In *that*, there may be sufficient Evidences of a *Resurrection*; notwithstanding that some of his professed Followers may have talked, with some doubtfulness, or great uncertainty, about it.

I might here observe that such sort of *Stories* are not always reported from the most credible *Authors*; or that they are often represented, and magnified, beyond what Simplicity, and Integrity, can justify. But I chuse to put it upon this, That, supposing the Truth of them, or of any like to them; the *Gospel* may, and doth, still stand untouched, and free from any disadvantage from them. Let it be true, that it hath been professed upon weak or worldly Grounds, by *some* Men; let it be true, that some things in it have been disbelieved by others. These are not the points in debate between the Men who believe it; and those who profess to reject it: but, whether, there be not great and sufficient Arguments for our embracing the profession of it; and for receiving *Him*, who instituted it, as sent from God. Whoever pretends to bring a disreputation upon it, ought, in justice, to take his Arguments, if he can find any, from what is really in it, as it lies in those Books themselves, which profess to acquaint us with it, in it's pure Original. But when, instead of this, Men have recourse to little *Stories*, and *Tales*, of Men, or of things, many Years after the *Institution* of it; as if they were *Points* which ought to affect the *Gospel* it self: this is a certain sign of the utmost prejudice; and not of any thing like an impartial and just *Examination*; which the *Gospel* it self never refuseth to undergo. Again,

When

When a long and tedious work is made about *False Miracles*, and *pretended Wonders*, and Impositions upon the Senses, and Understanding, of Mankind; and, at the same time, no distinction allowed in favour of those recorded in the *Gospel-History*; nay, when many insinuations are given as if all Pretences were alike; and, especially, when *Infidelity* and *Atheism* are, at the same time, complemented as the Effects of great Sagacity in those who have professed them: then, is it a plain sign, that the *Gospel* is not recommended to be ingenuously and fairly examined; but to be condemned, upon unjust and unequal Grounds. For, before the *Gospel Miracles* can be justly condemned, the point would be, to shew, that our *Lord* refused to do his great works before his *Adversaries*, or those who had an heart to examine them; as *Impostors* have done: That He avoided the light; and required of his immediate Followers *Faith* without *sight*; that He did not give sufficient Evidence to those about Him that He was neither an *Impostor*, nor an *Enthusiast*; that his Conduct was like that of those, who refuse all *Trial*, and give manifest proof that nothing of those great things are true, which they pretend in their own favour. For, how doth it follow, that, because there have been many *Cheats* in the World, therefore, there is no such thing as *Truth*? or, that nothing truly great and uncommon, sufficient to demonstrate the favour of God, hath ever been wrought in confirmation of what is excellent and good; because many vile Persons, have, at several times, for worldly Ends, and secular purposes, plaid *Tricks* with mankind; and imposed upon the minds of the Vulgar? Why should this be produced as an Inlet, and Introduction, to *Infidelity*? or what is there like it, in our *Lord's* conduct, that can justify such a Procedure?

The design of *Impostors* is presently seen through; to keep up a temporal authority; to maintain, or increase

increase, *Power*, or *Riches*. But *He* could not but be void of any such design; whose Low Estate, and utter Renunciation to every thing in this world, and certain Expectation of Death it self for his pretences, were as remarkable, as His Great and Mighty Works themselves. The *Doctrine of False Pretenders* appears plainly to tend to magnify themselves; and to set up a gainfull Kingdom over Men's consciences. But *His Doctrine* was Humility, and Contempt of this World; a preferring one another in love: It led to a Scene of self-denial, in many Cases; to the expectation of Rewards in another State, and of Persecution, in this. He aimed at no other Kingdom over Men, but the Government of their passions, and of their actions, by the rules of Reason; and the hope of Glory; and the fear of God's displeasure. And, therefore, the Suspicion of *Imposing* upon the world could not lie upon Him: as the appearance of it plainly lies upon other modern *Pretenders to Miracles*. And, therefore, His works themselves, should be examined: which, neither, in their Number, or Kind, bear any more resemblance to the pretended works of *Impostors*; than a vast variety of Beneficent, Divine, Charitable, Open, Acts, do to one single Trick repeated yearly; or to Empty, Useless Appearances; or to Clandestine, and dark Proceedings, without any Witnesses, but such as have an Interest to serve, a worldly cause to carry on, by endeavouring to support the Credit of them. This makes a vast difference: and should, in common justice, be taken into the account, by all who pretend to examine into so important a matter, as that of Religion.

If it should be replied, that it is for the worldly Interest of those who have corrupted *Christianity*, and made the *Riches* and *Grandeur* of this world a part of the *Gospel*; that it is for their interest, and for the continuance, and support, of all that they shall think

think fit to put upon mankind under the notion of *Christianity*, that the *Miracles* recorded in the *Gospel*, should have credit given to them; and be supported by such Persons: which may bring a just suspicion upon them: I answer,

1. *No Just Suspicion*, certainly, with any, who will consider, that it is plain, from all *Ancient Writers*, that the *Gospels* were in being; and the *Miracles* in them recorded, before any such abuses came into *Christianity*; nay, long before there was any *Temptation* to impose upon the *World*; that is, long before the *Princes*, or the *Favours*, of this *World* came into the *Church*; whilst little besides *Persecution* could be expected by *Christians*; and little hopes could appear of ever having it otherwise: that, from the beginning, during all that *Scene*, when nothing was promoted by these *Miracles*, but *Believing* in a *Crucified Saviour*, whose *Kingdom* was not of this *World*; then, I say, these *Miracles* were recorded in the *Gospel-History*. From whence it is plain that they have no relation to any such *Corruptions*, as came not into the *Church*, till very many *Years* after these *Miracles* were done; and these *Books* were written. But then,

2. The *Miracles* which *Christ* himself did, can confirm no *Doctrine*, but what *Christ* himself delivered to the *World*. They have no more relation to what hath been, or may be, fixed upon his *Religion*, by any who profess to follow Him; than if such Persons were not called *Christians*. This is very plain to all who weigh things equally. For, otherwise, they might be supposed to support *Pretenses* and *Doctrines*, directly opposite to his own: because *Christians*, so called, (I mean, many of those who profess themselves so,) are capable of being moved by *Worldly* considerations, to enter into measures directly opposite to those of his *Institution*; and to contradict his good and great design,

as much as if they were called by any other Name in the World ; the name *Christian* not altering either Men's Principles, or their Manners. It being therefore, impossible that our *Lord's* own *Miracles* can be the support of Doctrines, or Designs, directly contrary to his own ; it being certain, that they confirm nothing but what he designed they should confirm ; viz. His own Pretensions, and his own Religion, as delivered by *Him* ; and, consequently, that they cannot support any thing contrary to the Laws of God, and Universal Righteousness : there can be no ground of suspicion in *His* Case ; nor any excuse for bringing them under the same Head, with Works only pretended to be done ; and this, manifestly for the support of *Designs*, which neither *He*, nor his *Apostles*, acknowledged to be agreeable to his *Religion*. Nay,

3. Those who have taken upon them to add their own Inventions to his *Religion* ; and to appeal to any sort of *Tricks*, or pretended *Miracles*, for the support of those Inventions ; and for the keeping up a *Temporal Interest* in the World ; have never had the assurance to appeal to our *Lord's* own *Miracles*, for the support of what they have aimed at ; but have always thought it necessary to have *additional Miracles*, for *additional Articles of Faith* ; and *New Works*, to support their *New Designs*. So that they themselves give no ground to any Person to suspect our *Blessed Lord's* Works ; as having any unworthy Design to support : but plainly confess, by this procedure, that the *Miracles* which *He* did, go no farther, and were design'd no farther, than to support the *Doctrine* which He himself taught ; and to promote the End for which He came into the World.

It is, therefore, I say, manifestly unjust, to put the *Miracles* of our *Blessed Lord*, recorded in the *Gospels*, upon the same foot of suspicion, with *Those*, which, not only want the same sort of *Testimony*,

as

as to their *reality*; but also, are professed to be done, in order to support Worldly Ends, and such Designs, as we cannot but judge to be unworthy of God: when, at the same time, it must be acknowledged, that no such Designs can be supported by our *Lord's Miracles*; nor any indeed, but that noble Design, worthy of God, of Redeeming us, first from the *Power*, and then from the *Punishment*, of our Sins. To return,

4: When the *Persons*, who pretend to be great Enemies to the *Notions*, and *Speculations*, which have been brought by some Christians into Religion; nevertheless, embrace, and greedily catch at, any subtle, metaphysical, and abstruse, ways of Arguing, about Necessity, and Fate; or such like *Subjects*; not level to the Capacities of any number of Men; and perhaps not certainly intelligible to Men of great Understandings; when these puzzling, and mysterious Arguings, are advanced, and set up, against all the *Moral Evidences* of the *Gospel*; when, together with the pretense of rejecting every thing that is not plain in Religion, fine and unintelligible subtilties of *Disputation* are introduced: then, is there reason from such contradictory proceedings, to suspect great partiality, and little love to a *Just Examination* of things. When, instead of these *Moral Evidences* of *Christianity*, other sort of Arguings are put into Mens Heads; of which they never were, nor ever will be, tolerable Judges: This is a *partial*, and unequal, procedure; and what the same Persons would not perhaps be guilty of, in any other Case, but that of *Religion*. For the conduct of Humane Life, is guided and influenced by such *Moral Evidences*, as are sufficient to put Men beyond reasonable doubt; by the Testimony of Credible, and unexceptionable, Witnesses; and the absense of all real ground for
suspicion;

suspicion; and the like. Of which things, a little common Sense makes most Men pretty good Judges.

It hath pleased *God* to deal with Men, in the *Christian Dispensation*, in this easy method; in which they are so well satisfied in many other Cases. That our *Blessed Lord* lived, and died, and arose again; that, before his Death, He wrought many great and wonderful Works; and this with a Design, and *Doctrine*, worthy of *God*; we learn from such *Testimony*, as hath no Objection against it, that would be accounted good, in any other parallel Case. Now, supposing that it had pleased *Him* to have taken another Method; and to have spoken to us in an abstruse and Subtle way of Reasoning; without any such *Facts*; or any such *Testimonies* to them: I should not have wonder'd, if the same Persons should have been the first Complainers; and the first to have represented this *method*, as not likely to come from *God*; as too hard, and too unintelligible, to the *greatest part*, if not the *whole*, of Mankind. But if this would have been reasonable; how much more so is it, not to neglect the *Facts*, and *Testimonies*, upon which the Gospel relies, for the sake of any of those subtle Speculations, or Arguings, which are wholly unintelligible to the greatest part of Mankind; and by which the *Conduct of Humane Life* is never guided, in any considerable Instance: not to enter into a *Method*, which cuts off all *Examination* into the *Truth of Christianity*, at once; and builds an *Infidelity* upon *Cobwebs*, as thin, or as intricate, as any *Modern Schoolman* ever wove for his own *System of Christianity*.

Thus have I produced several Instances of a very unreasonable proceeding against *Christianity*: which doth not tend at all to the *Examination* of the *Truth of the Gospel*; but to the positive *Condemnation* of it, upon such grounds as, I have shewn you, cannot reasonably affect the foundation upon which that
is

is built. And, as unreasonable, as these are; yet, as far as I can see, or hear,) They are the chief of the *Modern Pretences of Unbelievers*, whenever they are endeavouring to bring a disreputation upon the *Gospel* itself. This is so true, that, if you take away their little *Stories* of Persons, and Things, many Years after *Jesus Christ*; their harangues about *Adfurdities*, and *Contradictions*, of some weak and passionate Men, which are not in the *Gospel*; their long and jocose accounts of *Modern Miracles*, and *Tricks*, play'd to support Designs, which the *Gospel* doth, not only not own, but, condemn: I say, that, if these be all taken away; together with a word or two of mysterious Reasoning, (of which the Bulk of Mankind are not Judges;) nothing of importance will be found to remain against the *Gospel* itself, or those *Evidences* which support it. And this must be ever accounted a vast advantage to *Christianity*; as it was delivered, by *Christ*, to the World.

S E R M. IV.

S E R M O N. IV.

I. Theff. V. xxi. *Prove all Things:
Hold fast that which is Good.*

IN my *Former Discourses* upon these Words,

I. I have, under the *first* General Head, shewn you the *Duty*, and *Nature*, of a Just Examination into our Religion.

II. Under the *second*, I have consider'd, on *one* side, the *Conduct* of those professed Christians, who would impose their own *Additions* to the *Gospel*, as of equal importance with it; and this by way of such *Authority*, and *Infallibility*, as to demand an *Implicit Subjection*, without any *Enquiries*: And, on the other hand, the *Conduct* of some others, in the contrary Extreme, who seem to have rejected the whole of *Christianity*, under the shew, but without the reality, of *Impartial* and *Just Examination*.

III. I propose now, to draw some useful *Inferences*, or *Lessons*, from what hath been already said.

I. The *first* that offers itself, is this, That it is but too probable that many, and especially the Chief, of Those who are in the *former* of the *Two Extremes*, which I have treated of, have no more real belief of the *Truth* of the *Gospel*; than Those who professedly reject it. I would not be understood to mean, that there may not be many simple, and otherwise

honest Men, acting, under *These*, for the bringing all the World to *Implicit Subjection*; who may think that they truly believe the *Gospel*, and are doing God service: or that there may not be many sincere Persons amongst those who profess this *Implicit Subjection*. But, if you examine into the great Worldly Interest; the Riches; the Power; the Grandeur; that are supported merely by these *Additions*; as well as into the Cunning and Understanding of *Those*, who enjoy the greatest share of these Advantages; and consider how plain a Contradiction, their whole Scheme is, to *Christianity* itself: you cannot forbear suspecting, that all their Zeal against others; all their *Persecution* of those they call *Heretics*; all their Madnesses, and Extravagances; their *Inquisitions*, and *Tortures*; are founded upon *Infidelity*; and that nothing could induce them to be guilty of such proceedings, but an opinion that this World is their all; and that there is no Account to be given in another.

That *Truth* is not the concern, is very plain: because *Truth* neither wants such *Advocates*, as outward Torments; nor is ever helped by them. An outward profession may be obtained and forced by them. But then this will be only *Hypocrisy*: for the inward persuasion will be rather diverted another way, than towards any thing that is to be worked into Men by such methods. Fire and Faggot; Imprisonment, and Confiscation of Goods; Hardship and Pressure; Hunger and Thirst; Cold and Nakedness; may make Humane Nature yield; and extort a Confession from the *Lips*: but the *Heart* will be farther from going along with it, than it would be, were the methods of Gentleness, and Goodness, applied to it. The only thing, therefore, aimed at, by the great Patrons of *Implicit Submission*, is An Outward, Uniform, Profession of the same things;
that

that is, an *Agreement in sounds*: which is no more to *Truth* it self, than the most distant thing in the World. Were the belief of the *Truth* of the *Gospel*, the matter aimed at; or *Faith* in *Jesus Christ*, the great design; nothing of all this could be seen in the World. But because so much of this is seen; that whoever will profess the same things, and utter the same sounds in public, is safe, and well received by those who gain most by *Implicit Subjection*: therefore, I say, is there little reason to judge that any sincere *Belief* of the *Gospel* it self is either embraced, or aimed at, by them.

This is so apparent in all those Countries, where *Implicit Subjection* is at it's heighth, and yet *Polite Learning* flourishes in any Degree; that it is a very common and profess'd, as well as profane, notion amongst themselves, that *Faith* and *Folly* go together. The true account of which, is this, That they think of no other *Faith*, but that which is conversant about the monstrous Opinions, and ridiculous or absurd Tenets, which support the Power and Riches of their *Ecclesiastical Governours*: and have lost all regard to the *Gospel*, in it's Simplicity; and all desire to enquire into it. For,

2. As there is little reason to suspect any true *Faith* amongst those, who, either gain so much of worldly good things, or, avoid so many worldly evils, by *Implicit Subjection*: So the patronizing such a *Blind Faith* naturally tends to a *Total Infidelity*; as a *Total Infidelity* tends reciprocally to the support of such a *Blind Faith*, and *Implicit Subjection*. For, Is it not very evident, that, when Men are kept in such Ignorance, or in such Dependence, that they hear little, or nothing at all, of any other Religion, but of one which sets up an *Infallibility* amongst weak, and passionate Men; which is big with such Doctrines as *Transubstantiation*, and the worship of *Saints* and *An-*

gels ; which vests Men with a power of *Indulging* Sins before they are committed, and absolutely *releasing* Men of their guilt after they have been committed ; which tends directly to nothing else, but to magnify the present Grandeur, and increase the worldly Pomp and Riches, of its chief Patrons ; and when the profession of such a *Religion* as this, is not left to Men's choice, or to be determined by *Argument* ; but is to be forced upon them by the application of outward evils ; which, in many Cases, are terrible, and next to intolerable, and yet not to be avoided : I say, when this is the Case, Will not this View of things incline many to wish that *Religion* may all be as much without foundation, as these points which they cannot embrace, or believe ? Will not this Inclination, and Worldly Interest, carry them still farther : and blind their Eyes, or their Hearts, so that they will not see any difference ; but condemn equally, in their thoughts, all that is called Religion ; and cast off that Belief of a *Future State*, and that expectation of a Judgment to come, which they see others to have cast off before them ? Will they not thus be carried away, by Inclination, and worldly Hopes and Fears, to turn *Infidels* first ; and then *Implicit Believers* ? first, to believe *nothing*, that they may with the more grace profess to believe *every thing*.

It can hardly be supposed otherwise, amongst those who will not go out of their way far, to search after *Truth* ; and have been educated, or find themselves placed, in the midst of a *Religion*, that imposeth such absurdities, and applies such terrible instruments of persuasion : and have understanding enough to see that there can be no Ground for such Doctrines ; or for such Methods of teaching them. It can hardly be supposed, I say, but that such Persons must incline to a *Disbelief* of every thing ;

in order to profess all that is required of them : which can be done by none but such, with so much grace, and so good an appearance. Thus doth the Cause of *Implicit Submission*, back'd by *Terrors*; and *Torments*, naturally beget *Infidelity* in the mind, as well as *Profession* from the lips : and this *Infidelity*, in order to requite the Kindness, gives it self back again, as the main support, and prop, of every thing relating to the *Scheme* of Infallibility, and Submission. It teacheth *Some*, to lay every thing they can think of, upon their *Votaries*, or *Inferiors*. And it teacheth *Others*, to bear every thing that can be laid upon them, rather than to hazard their *all* in this World ; which they take to be their only concern. It not only permitts ; but deviseth, and frames, the greatest *Usurpations* invented by *Superiors*. And not only this : but the same *Infidelity* frames and fashions, likewise, a Spirit of *Slavish Submission*, and *Outward Subjection*, in *Inferiors*, ready to receive every such *Usurpation* ; of what sort, or of what nature, so ever it be.

Thus is true Religion, between the *one Extreme*, and the *other*, stab'd to the heart ; and left without Life, or Strength. For the pleasing part of Religion to *Almighty God* ; and that, in which alone He delights, being the *Voluntary Reasonable Submission* of a Man, to *Him*, and to his *Laws* : where Force prevails, and the Argument is taken from Terror, and Humane punishment ; what place can remain for any freedom of choice ? and, without freedom of choice, where is *Virtue*, or *Honour* ? and, without *Virtue*, where can be the approbation of God ?

Is it not, therefore, an excellent *Topic*, which we often hear of, that these *methods* of *Severity* keep all things *quiet* ; that they enforce an outward *Uniformity* ; that they procure an external good appearance ; that they banish all Differences, and

Disputes; and the like? But, for *God's* sake, What is all this to *Truth*, and *Religion*: which are seated within; and are of no account, but as they are chosen, upon due grounds, by men? Not but that, with all these *Terrors*, many still are, and must be, the differences; which often are seen to flame out, to a great degree of Violence. But, What if they did not? Is *Truth* nothing? Is *Religion*, within a man's heart, nothing? Is Wickedness, or Cruelty, ever the less so; because it keeps men in awe? Is the *Power* of some, and the *Vile Submission* of others, the Point aimed at by our *Saviour*? And, Is the *Worship* of his *Father*, in *Spirit*, and in *Truth*, (which He declareth to be what God seeks after,) all dwindled into an *External Agreement*, without any regard either to *Understanding*, or to *Truth*? Are his *Spirit*; and his method of propagating his *Religion*, by preaching his *Doctrine*, and *Works*; found at last to be unworthy of God: and to be exchanged for the more rational method of *Torture*, and *Terror*? Is all the Poverty, and Misery, caused by these Methods, to be forgot? Is all the *Atheism*, and *Infidelity*, and *Wickedness*, which are occasioned by these, not to be charged to the account? But, a mere *Outward Submission*, and *tacit Subjection*, of *Terrified Creatures*, to be magnified, as a Blessing; and to be called *Religion*: and the *End* of the *Son of God's* living, and dying, in the World? No. It is impossible to conceive a greater indignity to *Religion*, than this is: and impossible for any, who understand what they say, to treat it after this manner, without having first thrown off all the impressions both of *Reason*, and *Revelation*.

Since, therefore, this *Implicit Subjection*, to every thing ordained by fallible men, cannot be supported and carried forward, but by *Force*, and *Tortures*, and great worldly Inconveniences; and since, when it is so supported, it so evidently tends to worldly

Ends

Ends only ; and since, on these accounts, it is the great *Introduction* to a *Total Infidelity*, which both teacheth *some* to enjoin it, and *others* to submit to it : it is evident, that it is so far from being a part of *True Religion*, that it is the greatest Enemy to it ; and ends in that *Inward Infidelity*, the outward profession of which, it pretends to forbid, and put a stop to.

3. The great Injury, therefore, done to *true Religion*, by both these *Extremes* ; and the *Patrons* of them ; is plain and evident. The *one* sort, professedly cast it off : charging upon it things which it knows nothing of ; and many of them, the corruptions, which *Infidelity* it self hath fixed upon it. And the *other*, do not indeed professedly cast it off : but, under pretense of supporting it, destroy all inward sincerity, (without which it is dead,) by outward force ; and introduce an *Hypocrisy*, which must be founded upon a *Disbelief* of all *True Religion*.

The methods, in which they *Both* deal with it, are highly injurious. *They*, on one side, pretend to talk mightily for it : they magnify it's glories ; and are full of *Zeal* for it's honour. But then, they will have no *Questions* asked about it : which is no great honour to what they profess themselves to believe as a truth. But the reason is, because by *Religion* they mean their own *additional Doctrines*, not to be found in the *Gospels* ; (which therefore they will not have too generally looked into :) and such *Doctrines* as they think may not stand the shock of an Enquiry ; but, when they are weighed in the balance, may be found wanting in some great and essential points belonging to Truth. While the *Others* charge upon *Religion*, the faults and abuses of Men ; and bring it into disrepute that way. This is highly injurious, Because *Christianity* it self invites, and desires, our *Examination*, and *Trial* ; and only, as it is found to be *Truth*, claims to be received : and because nothing

ought to suffer, in our Judgments, for the sake of what doth not belong to it. Yet, I think verily, the injury is greater to *Religion*, from *Those*, who forbid and hinder all *Enquiries*; than from *Those*, who profess to encourage them, tho' themselves are not just and impartial in them: because One, who is under the direction of the *former* sort, hath nothing left but to profess to believe equally every thing dictated by his Guides; (no difference, in matters proposed to Him, being allowed;) whereas, the general and profess'd principle of the *Others* may lead a Man, without *their* prejudices, to a sincere Enquiry into the *Gospel*; and to an hearty profession of it. But, tho' the *Injustice* of both these methods of proceeding, be manifest; yet,

4. I must observe that, amongst such as think justly, and will be but at a little pains in so important a matter, *Christianity* it self will receive no disadvantage from either of them. For, when a man comes to examine, and finds that the *Gospel* it self refuseth not the light, and loves not darkness; that, on the contrary, it gives encouragement to honest minds to *try*, and *see*, whether it be not worthy of God: a Person, I say, who finds this, will not put it upon a level with any *Religion*, which hates the light; which refuses and condemns all *Examination* into it; which relies upon *Force*, more than upon *Argument*; and allows not to any the least Judgment concerning what concerns them so much. When, in the prosecution of this *Enquiry*, the man finds that the *Doctrine* of it is so far from being absurd, that it is highly reasonable; so far from tending to any base worldly purposes, that it only promotes the true, and lasting, interest of all mankind equally: He will not place it to the disadvantage of such a *Religion*, that *Some*, who profess to own it, promulgate and enforce upon men, *Doctrines*, absurd in themselves; per-

pernicious to the world ; and tending to aggrandize the *Imposers* only. When He finds the *Miracles* that support it, beneficent, great, open, Acts ; done in the sight, often of Adversaries, and always, of Competent witnesses : they will not suffer, in his opinion, for the sake of *pretended Miracles* ; done in a corner ; before only Friends ; and *Those* whose worldly interest they support. The great difference, I say, will, by these means, presently appear, to an *Impartial man*, between a *Religion* that loves to appear in the light ; and one that *worketh in darkness*. Nay, the Unjust procedure for the support of the *one*, will be an advantage to the *other* : and help to satisfy him that the *Gospel*, which useth different means, and very contrary methods, of recommending it self to the World, hath not any of those marks of *Cheat*, or even Suspicion, upon it, which will ever stick upon any Religion, that requires a *Blind Submission* to every thing it enjoins.

Again, When the *Enquiry*, and *Examination*, of an honest Man, convinces him, that there are none of those *Tricks*, and *Follies* ; *Absurdities*, and *Contradictions* ; in the *Gospel* itself, which some Persons generally so much talk of, when they are designing to bring a disrepute upon it : He will think it a great advantage to *Christianity*, that they, who would disgrace it, do not think it fitting to treat it as they find it delivered by its *Author* to the World ; but bring in matters, wholly foreign to it, and not so much encouraged by it, as by any *Religion*, or *Infidelity*, that is, or can be, set up in opposition to it. And, as he finds no such things in the *Gospel*, as are sometimes urged as an *Inducement* to a *Disbelief* of it : So, He will be apt to conclude, that They, who are Adversaries to it, could find but little amiss in itself, and but little to object against it, taken either from the Life, or Doctrine, or Works,
of

of its *Author*; when they are obliged to have recourse to Doctrines, and Stories, which have no foundation in them, in order to weaken its Credibility.

Thus may the *Procedure* of Men, which is unjust in itself; and of bad consequence with weak Minds; tend to settle the Judgments of more considering Persons, in favour of *Christianity*. That which was designed to overcloud the *Gospel*, may make its Glory shine. That which was intended for the temporal Ends of Worldly Men, may advance the eternal Good of those who are sincere and upright: And, that which was designed to pull down, may build up. The Errors and Follies of *Some*; The Insincerity, and madness, of *others*; the Partiality, and Injustice, of *others*; may all administer an occasion to an honest and sincere *Enquirer*, to believe and practise that *Gospel*, which He finds, in itself, free from those *Errors*, and *Barbarity*, which *Some* would place upon a level with it; as well as from those *Follies* and *Wickednesses*, which *others* would charge upon it.

5. One more *Inference* I shall make, from what hath been already said; and that a very remarkable one, and very important to all Christians; viz. Since we see that the greatest *objections* against *Christianity* itself, are taken from the *Conduct* of *Christians*, and of *those* who pretend to believe and receive it; since we see that the main of what is insinuated against the *Gospel*, is taken from the behaviour of *those* who profess it; since all their foolish notions, or additions to it; all their furious Zeal and Madness; all the Violence and Ill-will against others; all that is bad amongst professed *Christians*; is perpetually made matter of *objection* against *Christ* himself, and his *Religion*: How unreasonable, and unjust soever this be; yet, how much doth it behove us all, not to give an handle, or occasion, to any, who

who wish not well to the *Gospel* itself, to attack it through our Weaknesses, Follies, or Passions?

We must consider that We are not guiltless of their unreasonableness, in thus dealing with the *Gospel*, on our accounts: if we unnecessarily, or unreasonably, lay Stumbling-blocks in their way; and prejudice them, by any conduct of ours, against the way of Salvation. For, as all *Wicked Christians* must expect to answer, at the great Day of Judgment, for their Sins, and Wickednesses; not only as they respect *themselves*, but *others* also; not only as they are transgressions of their holy Law, but as they tend effectually to make Men blaspheme that holy Name, by which they are called; not only as they make *themselves* guilty before God, but as they are seen to encourage, or promote, what is bad in *Others*: So, must all *Christians*, who teach, for the *Commandments* of God, the *Doctrines* of Men; who make their own *Additions* to the *Gospel*, of equal importance, and authority, with the *Gospel* itself; who bind upon Men heavy Burthens of their own contriving; who enlarge the *Faith* once delivered to the *Saints*, or contract the *Charity* absolutely enjoined to *Christians*: So, must all, I say, who act this part, expect to be judged, at the last Day, not only for their great *presumption*, as it respects themselves; but for the evil effect of it upon *Others*; for the *Infidelity*, and *Atheism*, and *Wickedness*, which, by means of their misbehaviour, hath entered into the World.

How little Prejudice would there be left, in the Minds of the Worst of Men, against the *Gospel* of *Christ*, if nothing were found amongst *Christians*, but what is to be found there; if the *Spirit* of the *Gospel* were always seen, where the profession of it is; if the *Gospel* itself were truly the *Creed*, and the *Law*, to *Christians*; the only measure of their *Faith*, and the only rule of their Actions; and if Love and Benevolence,

lence swallowed up, or covered, all lesser Differences, amongst those of the same denomination : how few, I say, would there then be left, of the *common Topics* against *Christ's Religion* ; and how many of those Handles, which unreasonable Men lay hold on, against it, would then be taken away ?

But, when another Scene is perpetually before the Eyes of the World ; when many of the *Stewards* of *Christ's* Dispensation, make themselves *Lords* and *Masters*, and claim an equal *Authority* with *Christ* himself, whose *Stewards* only they are ; when *These* are found *beating their Fellow-servants*, (as the *Parable* expresseth it,) and abusing them, when they should be *giving them their meat in due season* ; when *Worldly Ends* are brought into the most *Heavenly Religion* that ever appeared amongst Men ; and any *Doctrine*, tho' never so absurd, if it be for the increase of *Power* or *Riches*, is enforced upon Men, by the severest *Penalties* of this present World ; and all, under the common name of *Him*, whose *Kingdom is not of this World* ; when the *Faith* of *Christians* is new settled, by weak and fallible Men, *many hundreds* of Years after *Christ* left it settled by Himself ; and the *Charity* of *Christians* so confined, by these new Settlements, and by the *Decrees* of those who make them, that *Christians* of later Ages have been as effectually known by their *hating* and abusing one another, as their great *Master* desired they should be, by their *loving one another* : When this is the Case, I say, then we find *Infidelity* gaining strength, not from any *Arguments* of its own, but from those which it draws from the Conduct of professed *Believers* ; and many induced to doubt of, or cast off, the *Whole*, (which they are not at leisure thoroughly to examine,) for the sake of these *additional Evils* ; which, tho' not belonging to *Christianity* itself, yet, will ever be treated

ted of, by the Enemies of it, in such a manner, as if they did.

Thus, it is probable enough, that *Julian* himself became an *Apostate*, from the *Christians* of his time, rather than from *Christianity* itself: I mean, that their Behaviour growing then worse and worse, and especially their Animosities against one another, occasioned his relapse; and provoked the unthinking Man to what He could not have been moved to, upon the same accounts, had he consulted the Gospel only, and the conduct of that *Master*, whom they professed to follow. And how much, how very much, of the *Atheism*, and *Infidelity*, of these latter Ages, hath the *Church of Rome* to answer for? whose *Additional Articles of Faith*, and *Rules of Discipline*, backed with the Terrors of this World, and fixed upon *Christ* himself by his pretended *Vicegerent*, cannot but, with Men who think enough to see their Fallhood and Barbarity, and yet not enough to distinguish between *them*, and *Christianity* itself, weigh down the Scale to the side of a *Total Infidelity*: Which must be charged, not only upon the *Infidels* themselves; but upon all who have given them this Handle.

Christians cannot too often think of that denunciation of their *Master's*; *Woe be to the world, because of Offenses: i. e.* Great Mischief, and Evil, will come to Men, by *Stumbling-blocks*, laid in the way of the *Gospel*; over which They will fall; and be themselves condemned, for not taking more care, and walking with more caution. *For it must needs be that Offenses will come: i. e.* For, such is the Corruption; and such are the Various Passions, and Designs, of Mankind, that they will often lay such *Stumbling-blocks* in the way of their *Brethren*. But, *Woe be to that Man by whom they come. Woe to that Man; or that Church, or Body of Men; who, without*
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Reason, and without Authority, cast in the way such *Stumbling-blocks*, as are the occasion of falling to others ; the occasion of their turning out of the Paths of *Christianity* itself. This one Declaration of our *Lord's*, should, methinks, make all Persons afraid of deviating one Step from those *Lines* which He hath marked out in his *Gospel* ; or of venturing to enforce upon Men, any thing which is not truly and plainly *His*.

Our *Church*, which was reformed from *Popery* ; not upon the bottom of *Infallibility*, or *Incontestable Authority*, but upon that of *Appealing to Christ* himself, in his *Gospel* ; professeth, that the *Scriptures* are the *Rule* to all *Christians* ; and that nothing can be lawfully required of them, to *believe*, or *practise*, as peculiar to their *Religion*, but what is in *Them* plainly enjoined. If any, therefore, of the professed Members of this *Church*, have gone farther ; either pretending to *Powers*, which the *Gospel* gives them not ; or imposing *Systems of Religion*, about which the *Gospel* is not exprest ; either enforcing *doubtful* things, as *certain* ; or Matters, not made necessary by *Christ*, as of necessity to eternal Salvation : it is plain, the main and general Principle, by which the *Church* itself desires, and declares, that all ought to be conducted, doth by no means bear them out ; but indeed condemns and disapproves them.

Let us, therefore, consider seriously, that, as often as we forsake this *Rule* ; as often as we pretend to be *Wise above what is written* ; and, in any degree, or any sort, to add to *Christ's* Laws, or new model his *Doctrines* ; as often as we do, in any measure, approach to the *Violence*, or *Cruelty*, or *Censure*, which we constantly condemn in *others*, when they practise them against *our selves* ; as often as we abuse and vilify our Brethren, *judging others before the time*, instead of *judging our selves* ; as often as we
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i make, what should be the Subject of *Charity*, and *mutual Forbearance*, the fewel of *Unchristian Fires*, and *Unchristian Animosities*, against others ; in a word, that, as often as our *Lives* contradict, in any known Instance, the *moral laws* of our *Religion* ; or our *Understandings* set themselves up for *Infallible*, or *Decisive*, *Guides* to all others : that, so often we are probably making our *Religion* itself suffer in the opinion of *others* ; raising up new Enemies to God, or making his old Enemies a-new *BlaspHEME* ; and laying such *Stumbling-blocks* in Mens way, as may be fatal to many about us. Let us consider this seriously ; together with the great Work we have upon our own Hands, to prepare ourselves for that tremendous Day, when we hope that *God* will *not be Extreme to mark what is amiss* in ourselves : and We shall not easily be induced to have any Hand, upon any pretense whatsoever, in setting Men at a distance from that *Holy Gospel*, by which otherwise they might be made happy ; or, in increasing that *Infirmity*, which might otherwise happily end in embracing the *same Faith*, and laying hold on the *same Hope of Salvation*, which We have ourselves obtained, through *Jesus Christ, our Lord*.

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